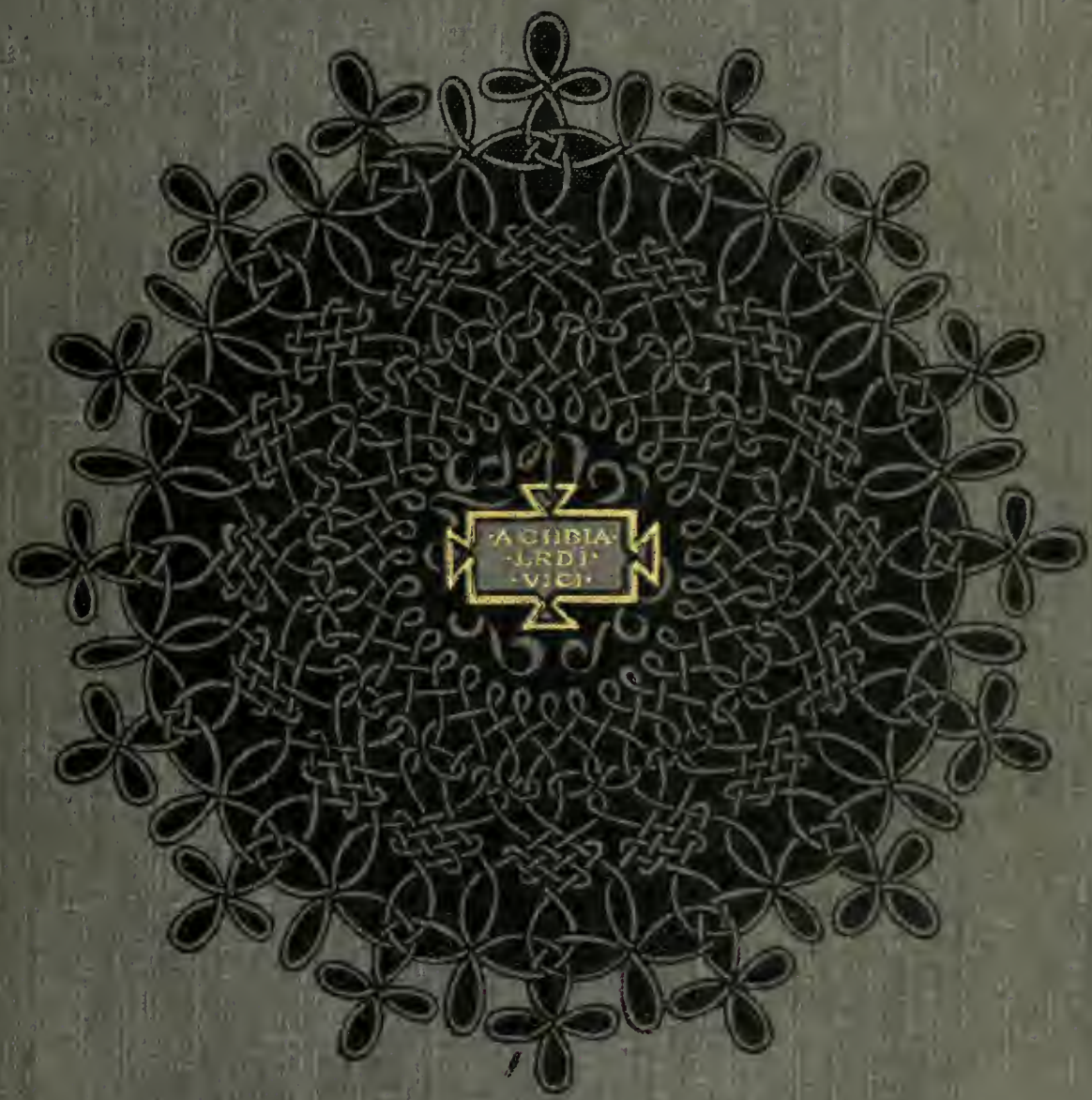
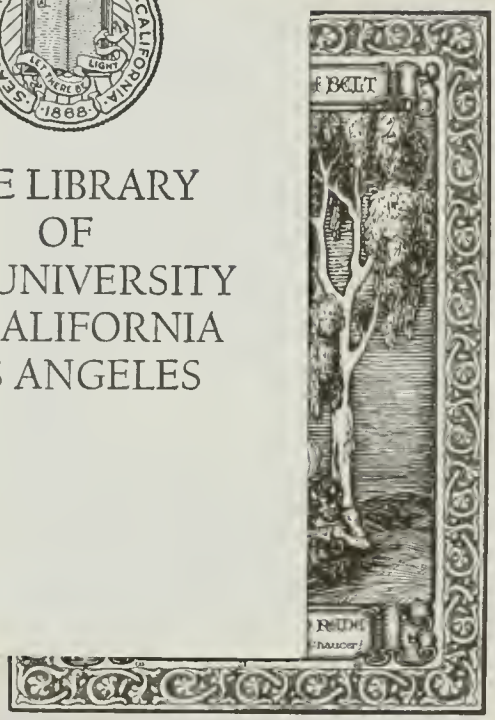

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LEONARDO DA VINCI



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1

Portrait of Leonardo da Vinci, by Himself

(ROYAL LIBRARY, TURIN)

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Artist, Thinker, and Man of Science

FROM THE FRENCH OF

EUGÈNE MÜNTZ

MEMBER OF THE INSTITUT DE FRANCE

KEEPER OF THE COLLECTIONS IN THE ÉCOLE DES BEAUX ARTS

With Forty-eight Plates and Two Hundred and Fifty-two Text Illustrations

IN TWO VOLUMES

First Volume



LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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MDCCCXCVIII

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ARTS

PREFACE

THERE is no name more illustrious in the annals of art and of science than that of Leonardo da Vinci. And yet this pre-eminent genius still lacks a biography which shall make him known in all his infinite variety.

The great majority of his drawings have never been reproduced. No critic has even attempted to catalogue and classify these masterpieces of taste and sentiment. It was to this part of my task that I first applied myself. And, among other results, I now offer the public the first descriptive and critical catalogue of the incomparable collection of drawings at Windsor Castle, belonging to her Majesty the Queen of England.

Among the many previous volumes dedicated to Leonardo, students will seek in vain for details as to the genesis of his pictures, and the process through which each of them passed from primordial sketch to final touch. Leonardo, as is conclusively shown by my researches, achieved perfection only by dint of infinite labour. It was because the groundwork was laid with such minute care, with such a consuming desire for perfection, that the *Virgin of the Rocks*, the *Mona Lisa*, and the *S. Anne* are so full of life and eloquence.

Above all, a summary and analysis was required of the scientific, literary, and artistic manuscripts, the complete publication of which was first begun in our own generation by students such as Messrs. Richter, Charles Ravaisson-Mollien, Beltrami, Ludwig, Sabachnikoff and Rouveyre, and the members of the Roman Academy of the "Lincei."

Thanks to a methodical examination of these autographs of the master's, I think I have been able to penetrate more profoundly than my predecessors into the inner life of my hero. I may call the special attention of my readers to the chapters dealing with Leonardo's attitude towards the occult sciences, his importance in the field of literature, his religious beliefs and moral principles, his studies of antique models—studies hitherto disputed, as will be seen.

I have further endeavoured to re-constitute the society in which the master lived and worked, especially the court of Lodovico il Moro at Milan, that interesting and suggestive centre, to which the supreme evolution of the Italian Renaissance may be referred.

A long course of reading has enabled me to show a new significance in more than one picture and drawing, to point out the true application of more than one manuscript note. I do not, indeed, flatter myself that I have been able to solve all problems. An enterprise such as that to which I have devoted myself demands the collaboration of a whole generation of students. Individual effort could not suffice. But at least I may claim to have discussed opinions I cannot share with moderation and with courtesy, and this should give me some title to the indulgence of my readers.

The pleasant duty remains to me of thanking the numerous friends and correspondents who have been good enough to help me in the course of my long and laborious investigations.

They are too many to mention here individually, but I have been careful to record my indebtedness to them, as far as possible, in the body of the volume.

EUGÈNE MUNTZ.

PARIS, *October*, 1898.

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LA BELLE FERRONNIÈRE.

(The Louvre.)

ERRATA

Vol. I.

P. 20, line 27, *for* "Lippo" *read* "Lippi."
P. 32. lettering of illustration, *for* "Musée National" *read* "Museo Nazionale."
Pp. 52 and 161, *for* "Adoration of the Magi" *read* "Adoration of the Shepherds."
P. 132, lettering of illustration, *for* "Gain" *read* "Gian."
P. 163, line 1, *for* "p. 167" *read* "p. 165."
P. 164, line 22, *for* "p. 171" *read* "p. 169."
P. 169, line 20, *for* "pp. 165 and 167" *read* "pp. 163 and 165."
P. 210, third line of note, *for* "p. 106" *read* "p. 104."

Vol. II.

P. 6, line 11, *for* "p. 67" *read* "p. 65."
P. 102, line 12, *for* "Romorontino" *read* "Romorantin."
P. 113, line 34, *for* "Fra Pietro da Nuvolaria" *read* "Tovaglia."
P. 225, line 18, *for* "half-a-dozen" *read* "four."



THE ANNUNCIATION ASCRIBED TO LEONARDO DA VINCI).
(The Uffizi, Florence.)

CHAPTER I

THE GENIUS OF LEONARDO—HIS CHILDHOOD—HIS FAMILY—SER PIERO—FIRST STUDIES AND EARLIEST ATTEMPTS—IN VERROCCHIO'S STUDIO—METHODS OF TEACHING—HIS FELLOW-STUDENTS: PERUGINO, LORENZO DI CREDI, ATALANTE—MASTER AND PUPIL.



LIFE STUDY.
(British Museum.)

IN Leonardo da Vinci we have the most perfect embodiment of the modern intellect, the highest expression of the marriage of art and science: the thinker, the poet, the wizard whose fascination is unrivalled. Studying his art, in its incomparable variety, we find in his very caprices, to use Edgar Quinet's happy phrase with a slight modification: "the laws of the Italian Renaissance, and the geometry of universal beauty."

It is true, unhappily, that setting aside his few completed works—the *Virgin of the Rocks*, the *Last Supper*, the *Saint Anne*, and the *Mona Lisa*—Leonardo's achievement as painter and sculptor is mainly present to us in marvellous fragments. It is to his drawings we must turn to understand all the tenderness of his heart, all the wealth of his imagination. To his drawings therefore, we must first call attention.

Two periods of human life seem to have specially fixed Leonardo's

attention: adolescence, and old age; childhood and maturity had less interest for him. He has left us a whole series of adolescent types, some dreamy, some ardent.

In all modern art, I can think of no creations so free, superb, spontaneous, in a word, divine, to oppose to the marvels of antiquity. Thanks to the genius of Leonardo, these figures, winged, diaphanous, yet true in the highest sense, evoke a region of perfection to which it is their mission to transport us. Let us take two heads that make a pair in the Louvre; unless I am mistaken, they illustrate Classic Beauty, and the Beauty of the Renaissance period. The first (No. 384) represents a youth with a profile pure and correct as that of a Greek cameo, his neck bare, his long, artistically curled hair bound with a wreath of laurel. The second (No. 382, Salle des Boîtes) has the same type, but it is treated in the Italian manner, with greater vigour and animation; the hair is covered by a small cap, set daintily on the head; about the shoulders there are indications of a doublet, buttoned to the throat; the curls fall in natural, untrained locks. Who cannot see in these two heads the contrast between classic art, an art essentially ideal and devoted to form, and modern art, freer, more spontaneous, more living.

When he depicts maturity, Leonardo displays vigour, energy, an implacable determination; his ideal is a man like an oak-tree. Such is the person in profile in the Royal Library at Windsor, whose massive features are so firmly modelled. This drawing should be compared with the other of the same head, at an earlier age.

Old age in its turn passes before us in all its diverse aspects of majesty or decrepitude. Some faces are reduced to the mere bony substructure; in others we note the deterioration of the features; the hooked nose, the chin drawn up to the mouth, the relaxed muscles, the bald head. Foremost among these types is the master's portrait of himself; a powerful head, with piercing eyes, under puckered eyelids, a mocking mouth, almost bitter in expression, a delicate, well-proportioned nose, long hair, and a long disordered beard; the whole suggestive of the magus, not to say the magician.

If we turn to his evocations of the feminine ideal, the same freshness, the same variety delight us here. His women are now candid,

now enigmatic, now proud, now tender, their eyes misty with languors, or brilliant with indefinable smiles. And yet, like Donatello, he was one of those exceptionally great artists in whose life the love of woman seems to have played no part. While Eros showered his arrows all around the master, in the epicurean world of the Renaissance ; while Giorgione and Raphael died, the victims of passions too fervently reciprocated ; while Andrea del Sarto sacrificed his honour to his love for his capricious wife, Lucrezia Fedi ; while Michelangelo himself, the sombre misanthrope, cherished an affection no less ardent than respectful for Vittoria Colonna, Leonardo, consecrating himself without reserve to art and science, soared above all human weaknesses ; the delights of the mind sufficed him. He himself proclaimed it in plain terms : " Fair humanity passes, but art endures. (Cosa bella mortal passa e non arte.)"

No artist was ever so absorbed as he, on the one hand by the search after truth, on the other, by the pursuit of an ideal which should satisfy the exquisite delicacy of his taste. No one ever made fewer sacrifices to perishable emotions. In the five thousand sheets of manuscript he left us, never once does he mention a woman's name, except to note, with the dryness of a professed naturalist, some trait that has struck him in her person : " Giovannina has a fantastic face ; she is in the hospital, at Santa Catarina." This is typical of his tantalising brevity.

From the very first, we are struck by the care with which Leonardo chose his models. He was no advocate for the frank acceptance of nature as such, beautiful or ugly, interesting or insignificant. For months together he applied himself to the discovery of some remarkable specimen of humanity. When once he had laid hands on this Phœnix, we know from the portrait of the *Gioconda* with what tenacity he set to work to reproduce it. It is regrettable that he should not have shown the same ardour in the pursuit of feminine types, really beautiful and sympathetic, seductive or radiant, that he showed in that of types of youths and old men, or of types verging on caricature. It would have been so interesting to have had, even in a series of sketches, a whole iconography by his hand, in addition to the three or four masterpieces on which he concentrated his powers ; the unknown *Princess* of the Ambrosiana, *Isabella d'Este*, the *Belle Ferronière*, and



STUDY OF A YOUTH
(Windsor Library)

the *Gioconda*. How was it that all the great ladies of the Italian Renaissance did not aspire to be immortalised by that magic brush? Leonardo's subtlety and penetration marked him out as the interpreter *par excellence* of woman; no other could have fixed her features and analysed her character with a like commingling of delicacy and distinction.

And yet, strange to say, by some curious and violent revulsion, the artist who had celebrated woman in such exquisite transcriptions, took pleasure in noting the extremes of deformity in the sex whose most precious apanage is beauty. In a word, the man of science came into conflict with the artist; to types delicious in their youthful freshness, he opposes the heads of shrews and imbeciles, every variety of repulsive distortion. It would almost seem—to borrow an idea from Champfleury—as if he sought to indemnify himself for having idealised so much in his pictures "The Italian master," adds Champfleury, "has treated womankind more harshly than the professed caricaturists, for most of these, while pursuing man with their sarcasms, seem to protest their love for the beautiful by respecting woman."



STUDY OF A YOUNG WOMAN.
(Windsor Library)

As a sculptor, Leonardo distinguished himself by the revival and

I

Studies of youthful Heads.

(THE LOUVRE.)





STUDY OF A YOUNG GIRL.
(Windsor Library.)

the re-creation—after Verrocchio and after Donatello—of the monumental treatment of the horse.

Painter and sculptor, Leonardo was also a poet, and not among the least of these. He is, indeed, pre-eminently a poet ; first of all, in his pictures, which evoke a whole world of delicious impressions ; and secondly, in his prose writings, notably in his *Trattato della Pittura*, which has only lately been given to the world in its integrity. When he consented to silence the analytic faculty so strongly developed in him, his imagination took flight with incomparable freedom and exuberance. In default of that professional skill, which degenerates too easily into routine, we find emotion, fancy, wealth and originality of images ; qualities which also count for much. If Leonardo knows nothing of current formulæ, of winged and striking words, of the art of condensation, he acts upon us by some indwelling charm, by some magic outburst of genius.



STUDY OF A YOUTH.
(Windsor Library.)

The thinker and the moralist are allied to the poet. Leonardo's aphorisms and maxims form a veritable treasury of Italian wisdom at the time of the Renaissance. They are instinct with an evangelic gentleness, an in-

finite sweetness and serenity. At one time he advises us to neglect studies the results of which die with us; at another he declares that he who wishes to become rich in a day, runs the risk of being hanged in a year. The eloquence of certain other thoughts is only equalled by their profundity: "Where there is most feeling, there will also be most suffering."—"Tears come from the heart, not from the brain." It is the physiologist who speaks; but what thinker would not have been proud of this admirable definition!

The man of science, in his turn, demands our homage. It is no longer a secret to any one that Leonardo was a *savant* of the highest order; that he discovered twenty laws, a single one of which has sufficed for the glory of his successors. What am I saying? He invented the very method of modern science, and his latest biographer, M. Séailles[1] has justly shown in him the true precursor of Bacon. The names of certain men of genius, Archimedes, Christopher Columbus, Copernicus, Galileo, Harvey, Pascal, Newton, Lavoisier, Cuvier, are associated with discoveries of greater renown. But is there one who united such a multitude of innate gifts, who brought a curiosity so passionate, an ardour so penetrating, to bear on such various branches of knowledge; who had such illuminating flashes of genius, and such an intuition of the unknown links connecting things capable of being harmonised? Had his writings been published, they would have advanced the march of science by a whole century. We cannot sufficiently deplore his modesty, or the sort of horror he had of printing. Whereas a scribbler like his friend Fra Luca Pacioli comes before the public with several volumes in fine type, Leonardo, either by pride or timidity, never published a single line.

In this brief sketch, we have some of the traits which made Leonardo the equal of Michelangelo and Raphael, one of the sovereign masters of sentiment, of thought, and of beauty.

It is time to make a methodical analysis of so many marvels—I might say, of so many *tours de force*, were not Leonardo's art so essentially healthy and normal, so profoundly vital.

We will begin by inquiring into the origin and early life of the magician.

The painter of the *Last Supper* and the *Gioconda*, the sculptor of

[1] *Léonard de Vinci. L'Artiste et le Savant.* Paris, 1892.

the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, the scientific genius who forestalled so many of our modern discoveries and inventions, was born in 1452 in the neighbourhood of Empoli, on the right bank of the Arno, between Florence and Pisa. The little town of Vinci, in which he first saw the light, lies hidden away among the multitudinous folds of Monte Albano. On one side, the plain with its river—now almost dry, now rushing in a noisy yellow torrent: on the other, the most broken of landscapes; endless hillocks scattered over with villas, and here and there at intervals, a more imposing height, whose bare summit is bathed in violet light at sundown.

Leonardo's native country was such then as we see it to-day; austere in character rather than laughing or exuberant, a rocky territory intersected by interminable walls, over which, in the vicinity of the houses, some straggling branch of rose-bush may clamber; for nucleus of the vegetation, vines and olive trees. Here and there, one catches a glimpse of villa, cottage or farm; in the distance, the dwelling has a smiling air, with its yellow walls and green shutters; but penetrate to the interior, and you will find nakedness and poverty—the walls with a simple coating of rough plaster, mortar or brick for flooring; very little furniture, and that of the humblest, neither carpets nor wall papers; nothing to give an impression of comfort, not to speak of luxury; finally, no precautions whatever against the cold, which is severe in this part of the country during the long winter months.

On these stern heights a race has grown up, frugal, industrious, alert, untouched by the nonchalance of the Roman, by the mysticism of the Umbrian, or the nervous excitability of the Neapolitan. The majority of the natives are employed in agricultural pursuits; the few artisans being merely for local use. As for the more ambitious spirits, for whom the horizon of their villages is too restricted, it is to Florence, to Pisa, or to Siena they go to seek their fortunes.

Certain modern biographers tell us of the castle in which Leonardo first saw the light; over and above this, they conjure up for us a tutor attached to the family, a library wherein the child first found food for his curiosity, and much besides. But all this—let it be said at once—is legend and not history.

There was, it is true, a castle at Vinci, but it was a fortress, a

stronghold held by Florence. As to Leonardo's parents, they can only have occupied a house, and a very modest one at that, nor do we even know for certain if this house was situated within the walls of Vinci itself, or a little beyond it, in the village of Anchiano.[1] The domestic service consisted of one *fante*, that is, a woman servant, at a wage of eight florins per annum.

If there ever was a family to whom the culture of the arts was foreign, it was that of Leonardo. Of five forbears of the painter on his father's side, four had filled the position of notary, from which these worthy officials derived their title of "Ser" corresponding to the



VIEW OF THE TOWN OF VINCI.[2]

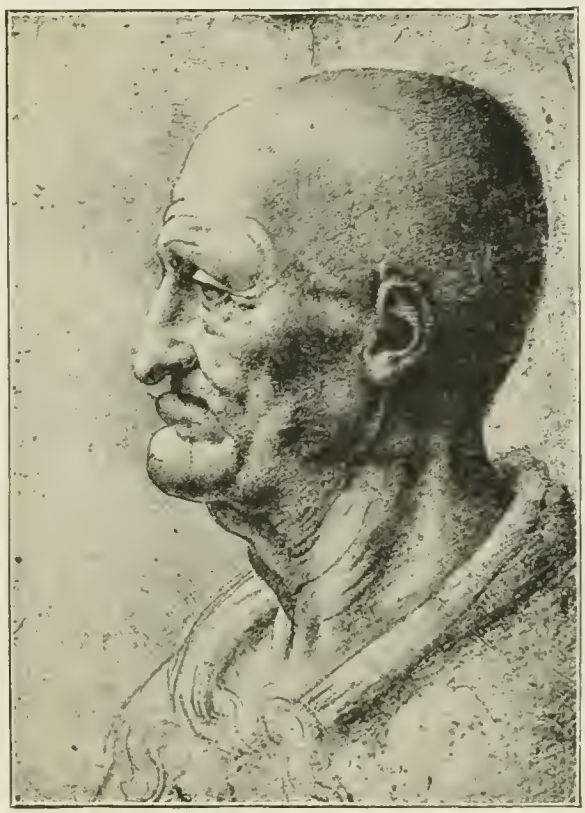
French "Maître": these were the father of the artist, his grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather. We need not be surprised to find this independent spirit *par excellence* developing in the midst of musty law-books. The Italian notary in no wise resembled the pompous scrivener of modern playwrights. In the thirteenth century, Brunetto Latini, Dante's master, was essentially wanting in the pedantic gravity which we are accustomed to associate with his profession. In the following century, another notary—Ser

[1] This last hypothesis is vigorously contested by Signor Uzielli (*Ricerche*, 2nd ed. vol. i. pp. 38–40), who shows that Leonardo's father owned no property at Anchiano till after the birth of his son.

[2] Our illustration reproduces a view of the town of Vinci from Signor Uzielli's *Ricerche intorno a Leonardo da Vinci* (1st ed. 1872, vol. i. frontispiece; 2nd ed. 1896, vol. i. p. 3.)

Lappo Mazzei de Prato—made himself famous by his letters, rich in racy traits of contemporary manners, and written in the purest Tuscan idiom. Finally, in the fifteenth century, the notary of Nantiporta edited a chronicle—occasionally far from edifying—of the Roman court. Here too, we may recall the fact that Brunellesco and Masaccio were the sons of notaries.

One point of capital interest in retracing the origin of Leonardo and his family connections, is the strange freak of fate in bringing forth this artistic phenomenon from the union of a notary and a peasant girl, and in the midst of the most commonplace and practical surroundings. It is very well in speaking of Raphael, for instance, to talk of race selection, of hereditary predisposition, of educational incitements. The truth is, that with the vast majority of our famous artists the aptitudes and special faculties of the parents count for nothing, and that the personal vocation, the mysterious gift, is everything. Oh, vain theories of Darwin and of Lombroso, does not the unaccountable apparition of great talents and genius perpetually set your theories at naught? Just as nothing in the profession of Leonardo's forefathers gave any promise of developing the artistic vocation, so the nephew and grand-nephews of the great man sank to simple tillers of the soil. Thus does nature mock our speculations! Could the disciples of Darwin carry out their scheme of cross-breeding on the human species, there is every chance that the result would be a race rather of monsters than of superior beings.



STUDY OF OLD MAN.
(The Uffizi, Florence)

However, if it were not in the power of Leonardo's parents to transmit genius to him, they at least were able to provide him with robust health, and a generous heart.

As a child, Leonardo must have known his paternal grandfather, Antonio di Ser Piero, who was eighty-four years of age when the boy was five; also his grandmother, who was twenty-one years younger than her husband.[1] Further details as to these two personages are wanting, and I confess frankly that I shall not attempt to pierce the obscurity which surrounds them. But it would be inexcusable in me not to employ every means in my power to follow up at least some characteristic traits of their son, the father of Leonardo.

Ser Piero was twenty-two or twenty-three years of age at the time of Leonardo's birth. He was—and despite their apparent dryness, existing documents testify to this—an active, intelligent, and enterprising man, the veritable builder up of the family fortunes. Starting from the smallest beginnings,[2] he rapidly extended his practice and acquired piece after piece of landed property; in short, from a poor village notary he rose to be a wealthy and much respected personage. In 1498, for instance, we find him owner of several houses and various pieces of land of more or less extent. Judging by the brilliant impulse he gave to his fortunes, by his four marriages, preceded by an irregular connection, and also by his numerous progeny, his was assuredly a vivid and exuberant nature, one of those patriarchal figures

[1] In 1469–70 the family consisted of the grandmother Lucia, aged seventy-four, of Ser Piero (forty), and his wife Francesca (twenty), of Francesco, Piero's brother (thirty-two), member of the "Arte della seta," of Alessandra, wife of Francesco (twenty-six), and of Leonardo, Piero's illegitimate son (eighteen). They inhabited a house near the church—"nel popolo di S. Croce," a district of Vinci. In Florence they occupied half a house, for which they paid 24 florins a year. They also owned a house at Fiesole. (Amoretti, *Memorie storiche su la vita, gli studj e le opere di Lionardo da Vinci*, Milan, 1804, pp. 7, 9. Uzielli, *loc. cit.*)

[2] One of his appointments—that of procurator to the Convent of the Annunciation—only brought him in emoluments to the amount of 2 florins (about £4) a year. In 1451, his father's income from real estate came to about £30 of English money. When this fortune came to be divided between the two sons, Ser Piero drew an income of about 400 francs from the paternal heritage. Vasari names Ser Piero, the father of Leonardo, among the organisers of the pageant given in 1513 to celebrate the accession of Leo X. to the papal throne. But as Ser Piero died in 1504 the office must have been held by one of his sons—Ser Giuliano—of whom we know for certain that he took part in the organisation of the pageants in the carnival of 1515—1516. (Vasari, ed. Milan, vol. vi. p. 251.)

Benozzo Gozzoli painted with so much spirit on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa.

While yet very young, Ser Piero formed a connection with her who, though never his wife, became the mother of his eldest son. This was a certain Catarina, in all probability a simple peasant girl of Vinci or the neighbourhood. (An anonymous writer of the sixteenth century affirms, nevertheless, that Leonardo was "per madre nato di bon sangue.") The *liaison* was of short duration. Ser Piero married in the year of Leonardo's birth, while Catarina, in her turn, married a man of her own standing, who answered to the not very euphonious name of Chartabrigha or Accartabrigha di Piero del Vaccha, a peasant too, most likely—indeed, what was there to turn to in Vinci for a living, except the soil! Contrary to modern custom and the civil code, the father undertook the rearing of the child.

In the beginning, Leonardo's position was, relatively speaking, enviable, his first two stepmothers having no children—a circumstance which has not been taken into account hitherto, and which goes far to explain how they came to adopt the little intruder: he usurped no one's birthright. [1]

Leonardo was three and twenty when his father—who made up so well for lost time afterwards—was still waiting for legitimate offspring. With the arrival of the first brother, however, the young man's happiness fled, and there was no more peace for him under his father's roof. He realised that nothing remained for him but to seek his fortune elsewhere, and did not wait to be told twice. From this moment, too, his name vanishes from the family list in the official records.

On more than one occasion, Leonardo mentions his parents, notably his father, whom he designates by his title of "Ser" Piero, but without one word by which one may judge of his feelings towards them. One might be tempted to tax him with want of heart, if such an absence of sentiment were not a characteristic feature of the times. Both parents and children made a virtue of repressing their

[1] A certain Alessandro degli Amatori, a brother of Ser Piero's first wife, alludes to Leonardo as his nephew, although, in reality, there was no legal relationship between them. In 1506 particularly, this person made himself the assiduous interpreter to Leonardo of the wishes of the Marchesa Isabella d'Este. (Yriarte, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1888, vol. i. p. 128—129.)

emotions; guarding themselves especially against the slightest manifestation of sentimentality. No period ever exhibited a more marked aversion for the emotional or the pathetic. Only here and there, in letters—for example, in the admirable letters of a Florentine patrician, Alessandra Strozzi, mother of the famous banker,—some irrepressible cry of the heart escapes.

This notwithstanding, Leonardo's impassibility exceeds all bounds, and constitutes a veritable psychological problem. The master registers without one word of regret, of anger, or of emotion, the petty thefts of his pupil, the fall of his patron, Lodovico il Moro, the death of his father.



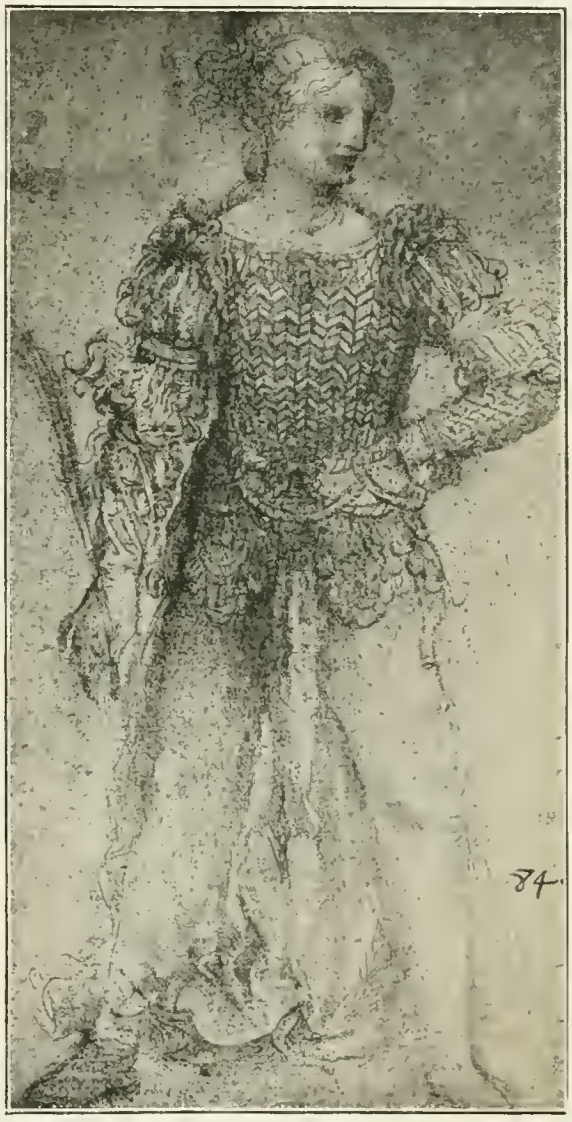
STUDIES OF INFANTS (FOR THE SAINT ANNE).
(Musée Condé, Chantilly.)

And yet we know what a wealth of kindness and affection was stored up in him; how he was indulgent, even to weakness, towards his servants, deferred to their caprices, tended them in sickness, and provided marriage portions for their sisters.

Let us forthwith conclude the story of Leonardo's connection with his natural family, which was very far from being his adoptive one. Ser Piero died July 9, 1504, at the age of seventy-seven, and not eighty, as Leonardo reports when registering his death in laconic terms.[1] Of

[1] "Adi 9 di Luglio 1504, mercoledi a ore 7 mori ser Piero da Vinci, notaio al palazzo del Potestà, mio padre, a ore 7. Era d'età d'anni 80, lasciò 10 figlioli maschi e 2 femmine." (J. P. Richter, *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. ii. p. 416. London, 1883. 2 vols. 4to. We have borrowed several plates from this richly illustrated work.)

his four stepmothers, the last only, Lucrezia, who was still alive in 1520, is mentioned in terms of praise by a poet-friend of Leonardo, Bellincioni. As to the nine sons and two daughters, all the issue of the two last marriages of his father, they seem to have been rather the adversaries than the friends of their natural brother. After the death of their uncle in 1507, more especially, they raised financial difficulties. By his will of August 12, 1504, Francesco da Vinci had left a few acres to Leonardo—hence a lawsuit. Later, however, a reconciliation was effected. In 1513, during Leonardo's residence in Rome, one of his sisters-in-law charged her husband to remember her to the artist, then at the height of his glory. In his will, Leonardo left his brothers, in token of his regard, the 400 florins he had deposited at the Hospital of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. Finally, his beloved disciple, Melzi, in his letter to Leonardo's brothers informing them of the master's death, adds that he has bequeathed them his little property at Fiesole. The will, however, is silent on this point. Besides all this, one of his youthful productions, the cartoon of *Adam and Eve*, remained in the possession of one of his kinsmen



STUDY OF A YOUNG WOMAN.

(Windsor Library.)

(Vasari says his uncle) who afterwards presented it to Ottavio de' Medici.

No other member of the da Vinci family made his mark in history, with the exception of a nephew of Leonardo, Pierino, an able sculptor, who died in Pisa towards the middle of the sixteenth century at the early age of thirty-three. The sole trait which the Vinci seem to have inherited from their common ancestor is a rare vitality. Ser Piero's stock has survived even to our own times. In 1869 Signor Uzielli, a most lucky investigator, discovered a peasant named Tommaso Vinci, near Montespertoli, at a place called Bottinaccio. After due verification, this peasant who had the family papers in his possession [1] and who, like his ancestor, Ser Piero, was blessed with a numerous progeny, was found to be a descendant of Domenico, one of Leonardo's brothers. A pathetic touch in a family so cruelly fallen from its high estate is the fact that Tommaso da Vinci gave his eldest son the glorious name of Leonardo. On page 15 we give the genealogy of the family of da Vinci as drawn up by Signor Uzielli.

Nothing can equal the vital force of Italian families. That of Michelangelo still exists, like that of Leonardo. But how sadly fallen! When, on the occasion of the centenary festivals in 1875, any possibly remaining members of the Buonarroti family were searched for, it came to light that the head of the family, Count Buonarroti, had been condemned to the galleys for forgery; another Buonarroti was a cabdriver in Siena, and yet another a common soldier. Let us hope that in honour of his glorious ancestor he was advanced to the rank of general! If the latest scions of Leonardo's house do not occupy a brilliant position, at least there is no stain upon the honour of their name.

Having acquainted ourselves with the family of Leonardo da Vinci, it is time to analyse the qualities of this child of genius, this splendidly endowed nature, this accomplished cavalier, this Proteus, Hermes, Prometheus, appellations which recur every moment under the pens of his dazzled contemporaries.[2] "We see how Providence," exclaims one of these, "rains down the most precious gifts on certain men, often

[1] These papers now form part of the archives of the Accademia dei Lincei, Rome.

[2] Lomazzo, *Trattato della Pittura.*

with regularity, sometimes in profusion; we see it combine unstintingly in the same being beauty, grace, talent, bringing each of these qualities to such perfection that whichever way the privileged one turns, his every action is divine, and, excelling those of all other men, his qualities appear what, in reality, they are: accorded by God, and not acquired by human industry. Thus it was with Leonardo da Vinci, in whom were united physical beauty beyond all

GENEALOGY OF THE DA VINCI FAMILY:

Ser Michele da Vinci Notary.
Ser Guido Notary (living in 1339).
Ser Piero Notary (living in 1381).
Antonio.....(born in 1372).
Ser Piero Notary (1427—1504).

WIVES OF SER PIERO:

1. Albiera di Giovanni Amadori, married 1452.
2. Francesca di ser Giuliano Lanfredini, married 1465.
3. Margherita di Francesco di Jacopo di Guglielmo, married before 1476.
4. Lucrezia di Guglielmo Cortigiani.

CHILDREN OF SER PIERO:

Leonardo Illegitimate.

Children of the Third Marriage:

Antonio born 1476.
Ser Giuliano born 1479.
Lorenzo born 1484.
Violante born 1485.
Domenico, born 1486. Descendants living at the present day.

Children of the Fourth Marriage:

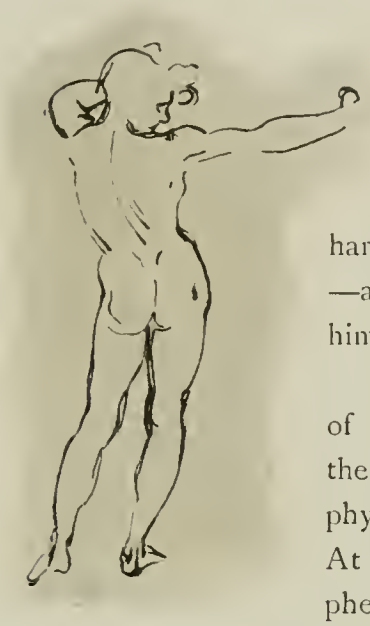
Margherita born 1491.
Benedetto born 1492.
Pandolfo born 1494
Guglielmo born 1496.
Bartolommeo, born 1497, ancestor of Pierino da Vinci.

Giovanni

praise, and infinite grace in all his actions; as for his talent, it was such that, no matter what difficulty presented itself, he solved it without effort. In him dexterity was allied to exceeding great strength; his spirit and his courage showed something kingly and magnanimous. Finally, his reputation assumed such dimensions that, wide-spread as it was during his life-time, it extended still further after his death." Vasari, to whom we owe this eloquent appreciation, concludes with a phrase, untranslatable in its power of rendering the majesty of the person described: "Lo splendor dell' aria sua, che bellissimo era,

rissereneva ogni animo mesto." ("The splendour of his aspect, which was beautiful beyond measure, rejoiced the most sorrowful souls.")

Leonardo was gifted by nature with most unusual muscular strength: he could twist the clapper of a bell or a horse-shoe as if it were of lead. A species of infirmity, however, was mingled with this extraordinary aptitude: the artist was left-handed—his biographers assert this formally[1]—and in his old age, paralysis finally deprived him of the use of his right hand.



STUDY OF YOUTH (FOR THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI).

(Collection P. Valton.)

The Renaissance had already produced one of these exceptional organisations, combining the rarest intellectual aptitudes with every physical perfection, beauty, dexterity, strength. At once mathematician, poet, musician, philosopher, architect, sculptor, an ardent disciple of the ancients, and a daring innovator, Leone Battista Alberti, the great Florentine thinker and artist, excelled in all physical exercises. The most fiery horses trembled before him; he could leap over the shoulders of a grown man with his feet touching each other; in the cathedral at Florence he would throw a coin into the air with such force that it was heard to ring against the vaulted roof of the gigantic edifice. The temple of S. Francis at Rimini, the Rucellai palace in Florence, the invention of the *camera lucida*, the earliest use of free verse in the Italian language, the reorganisation of the Italian



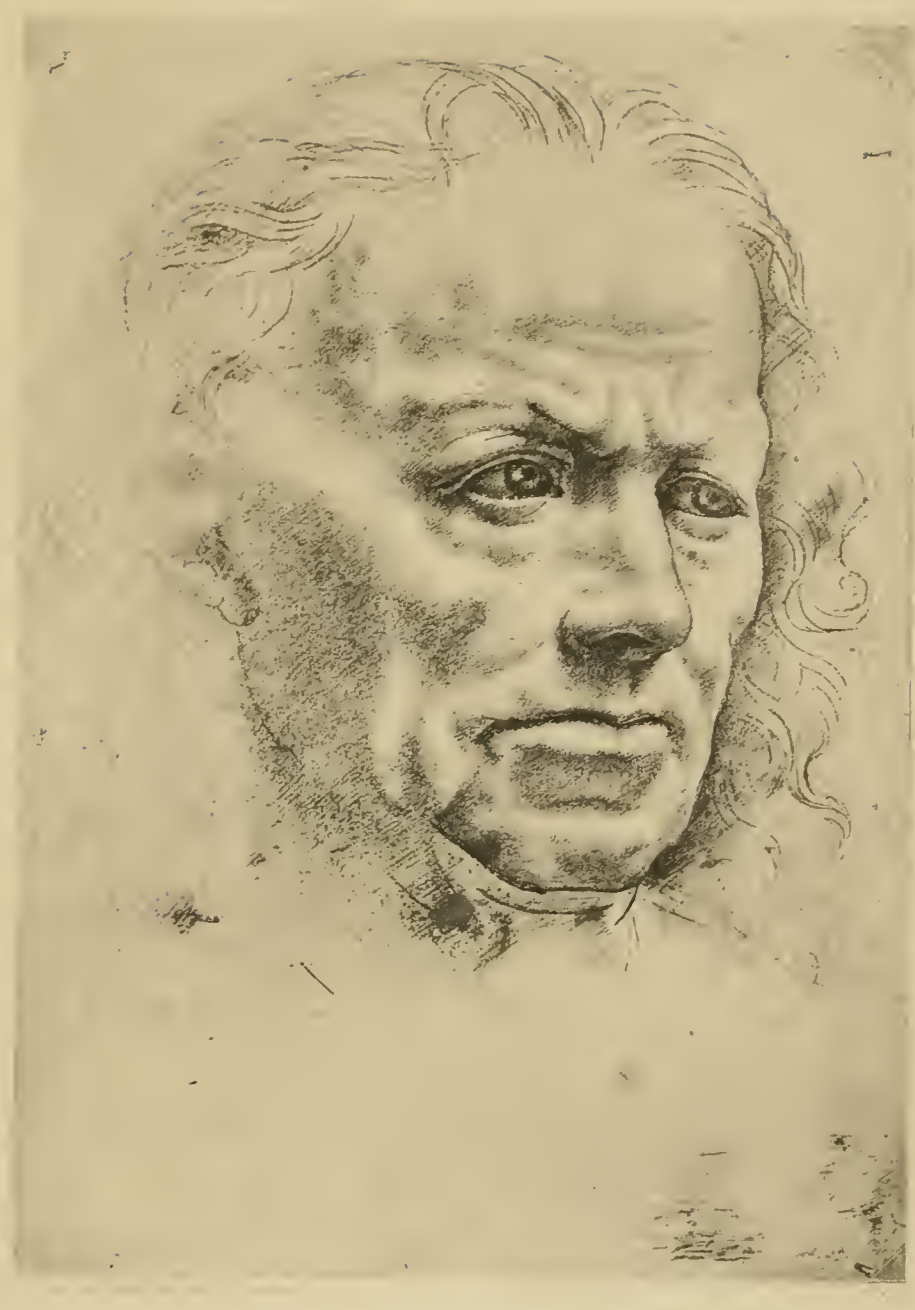
STUDY OF HELMETED HEADS.

(Windsor Library.)

[1] "Quella ineffabile senistra mano a tutte discipline matematiche accomodatissima"—"Scrivesi ancora allo rovescia e mancina che non si posson leggere se non con lo specchio, ovvero guardando la carta del suo rovescio contro alla luce, como so m'intendi senz' altro dica, e come fa il nostro Leonardo da Vinci, lume . . . della pittura, qual' e mancino, come più volte è detto." (Pacioli, *De Divina Proportione.*)

II

Study of Drapery.





theatre, treatises on painting, on sculpture, and many other works of the highest merit—such are Alberti's titles to the admiration and gratitude of posterity. But the Renaissance, on approaching maturity, was to endow another son of Florence with yet greater power, a still wider range. Compared with Leonardo how pedantic, how narrow, nay, how timorous Alberti appears!



THE UNBELIEF OF S. THOMAS, BY VERROCCHIO.
(Or San Michele, Florence.)

These faculties of the mind in no wise prejudiced the qualities of the heart. Like Raphael, Leonardo was distinguished for his infinite kindliness, like him he lavished interest and affection even upon dumb animals. Leonardo, Vasari tells us, had so much charm of manner and conversation that he won all hearts. Though, in a certain sense, he had nothing of his own and worked little, he always found means to keep servants and horses, of which latter he was very fond, as indeed of all animals; he reared and trained them with as much love as patience. Often, passing the places where they sold birds, he would buy some, and taking them out of their cages with his own hand, restore them to liberty. A contemporary of Leonardo, Andrea Corsali, writes from India in 1515 to Giuliano de' Medici, that like "il nostro Leonardo da Vinci" the inhabitants of these regions permit no harm to be done to any living creature.[1] This longing for affection, this liberality, this habit of looking upon their pupils as their

[1] It appears from Corsali's letter that Leonardo ate no meat, but lived entirely on vegetables, thus forestalling our modern vegetarians by several centuries. (Richter's *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. ii. p. 130.)

family, are traits which the two great painters have in common, but are the very traits which distinguish them from Michelangelo, the misanthropic, solitary artist, the sworn foe of feasting and pleasure. In his manner of shaping his career, however, Raphael approaches far nearer to Michelangelo than to Leonardo, who was proverbially easy-going and careless. Raphael, on the contrary, prepared his future with extreme care ; not only gifted but industrious, he occupied himself early in the foundation of his fortune ; whereas Leonardo lived from hand to mouth, and subordinated his own interests to the exigencies of science.

From the very beginning—and on this point we do not hesitate to accept Vasari's testimony—the child showed an immoderate, at times even extravagant, thirst for knowledge of every description ; he would have made extraordinary progress, had it not been for his marked instability of purpose. He threw himself ardently into the study of one science after another, went at a bound to the very root of questions, but abandoned work as readily as he had begun it. During the few months he devoted to arithmetic, or rather to mathematics, he acquired such knowledge of the subject that he nonplussed his master every moment, and put him to the blush. Music had no less attraction for him ; he excelled particularly on the lute, which instrument he used later for the accompaniment of the songs he improvised.[1] In short, like another Faust, he desired to traverse the vast cycle of human knowledge, and, not content to have assimilated the discoveries of his contemporaries, to address himself directly to nature in order to extend the field of science.

We have now pointed out the rare capacities of the young genius, the variety of his tastes and acquirements ; his pre-eminence in all bodily exercises and all intellectual contests ; it is time to consider the use he made of such exceptional gifts. Despite his precocious versatility, one ruling faculty soon showed itself conspicuously in him, and that was a strong, an irresistible vocation for the arts of design. In studying his first original productions, we discover that, to a far greater degree than Raphael, Leonardo was a prodigy. The latest researches have proved how slow and toilsome was the development

[1] On Leonardo as a musician see the *Ricerche* of Sig. Uzielli, 2nd ed., vol. i. pp. 557—577.

of the artist of Urbino, through what arduous labour he had to pass before he could give free play to his originality. There was nothing of this with Leonardo. From the first, he declares himself with admirable authority and originality. Not that he was a facile worker—no artist produced more slowly—but, from the very outset, his vision was so personal, that from being the pupil of his masters, he became their initiator.

Leonardo's father seems to have resided more often in Florence than in Vinci, and it was undoubtedly in the capital of Tuscany, and not in the obscure little town of Vinci, that the brilliant faculties of the child were unfolded. The site of the house occupied by the family has recently been determined; it stood in the Piazza San Firenze, on the spot where the Gondi palace now stands, and disappeared towards the end of the fifteenth century, when Giuliano Gondi pulled it down to make room for the palace to which he gave his name.

What Florence was during that period of political exhaustion, of industrial and commercial prosperity, of literary, scientific, and artistic exaltation, I shall not attempt to set forth here. Among my present readers there are, perhaps, some who have not forgotten earlier publications of mine, notably *Les Précurseurs de la Renaissance*, in which I traced a picture—fairly complete, I think—of intellectual life on the banks of the Arno in the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

Towards the period when the da Vinci family settled in Florence, the Florentine school had arrived at one of those climacteric crises at which a power must either abdicate, or start afresh on new lines. The revolution inaugurated by Brunellesco, Donatello, and Masaccio had effected all it was capable of effecting; and we see their successors in the last part of the fifteenth century wavering between imitation and mannerism, powerless to fertilise an exhausted inheritance. In architecture, great as was the talent of the San Galli, the sceptre speedily passed into the hands of Bramante of Urbino, then into those of the representatives of Upper Italy—Vignole, who was born near Modena, Serlio, a native of Bologna, Palladio, most famous of the sons of Vicenza. In sculpture, one Florentine only had achieved a commanding position since Verrocchio and Pollajuolo; it is true that his

name was Michaelangelo; but what hopeless mediocrity surrounded him, and how one feels that here too the last word had been said!

As in all periods in which inspiration fails, there reigned in the Florentine studios a spirit of discussion, of death-dealing criticism, eminently calculated, to discourage and enervate. No longer capable of producing strong and simple works like the glorious masters of the first half of the century, Masaccio, Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca, or even Andrea del Castagno, every painter strove after novelty, originality, "terribilità"—the word by which Vasari designates this tendency—hoping thereby to place himself above criticism. No artists could be more mannered than these Florentine painters of the end of the fifteenth century; one would willingly give all the cunning of a Pollajuolo for a dash of inspiration. In female beauty, the prevailing ideal was a morbid and suffering type, pale and wasted faces, drooping eyelids, veiled glances, plaintive smiles: if they charm in spite of their incorrect lines it is because they reflect a last ray of the mystical poetry of the middle ages. This ideal, as far removed from the robust and almost virile figures of Masaccio, of Piero della Francesca, of Andrea del Castagno, as it was from the severe though dry distinction of Ghirlandajo's type, was affected, first and foremost, by Fra Filippo Lippo, who was imitated by his son Filippino and by Botticelli. It was mannerism in one of its most dangerous forms.



THE BEHEADING OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, BY VERROCCHIO.

(Museum of the Duomo, Florence.)

But let us hear what Leonardo himself has to say, and how clearly he defines the part played by Giotto and afterwards by Masaccio, whose frescoes he no doubt copied, as did all young Florence at that time. "After these came Giotto the Florentine, who—not content with imitating the works of Cimabue, his master—being born in the mountains, and in a solitude interrupted only by goats and such beasts, and being guided by Nature to his art, began by drawing on the rocks the movements of the goats of which he was keeper. And thus he

began to draw all the animals which were to be found in the country, and in such wise that after much study he excelled not only all the masters of his time, but all those of many bygone ages." (We may note in passing that Leonardo's testimony confirms the touching account—sometimes questioned—which Ghiberti and Vasari have given us of the early efforts of Giotto). "Afterwards this art declined again, because every one imitated the pictures that were already done. Thus it went on from century to century until Thomas of Florence, nicknamed Masaccio, showed by his perfect works, that those who take for their standard any one but Nature—the mistress of all masters — weary themselves in vain."[1]



THE CHILD WITH A DOLPHIN, BY VERROCCHIO.

(Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.)

According to a story which has all the appearance of truth, Ser Piero da Vinci, struck by the marked aptitude of his son, took some of his sketches to his friend Verrocchio and begged him to give his opinion on them. The impression made, we are told, was excellent, and Verrocchio did not hesitate to accept the youth as his pupil.

If we assume that Leonardo was then about fifteen, we shall be within range of probability in default of any certain statement on the subject. As I have shown elsewhere,[2] the majority of the artists of the Renaissance were distinguished for their precocity. Andrea del Sarto began his apprenticeship at seven years of age; Perugino at nine; Fra Bartolommeo at ten; at fifteen

[1] Richter. *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. i. p. 332.

[2] See my *Raphael*, 2nd ed., pp. 19, 39—40.

Michelangelo executed the mask of a satyr which attracted the notice of Lorenzo the Magnificent; finally, Mantegna painted his first masterpiece—the Madonna of the church of S. Sophia at Padua—when he was seventeen.

Autres temps, autres mœurs! Nowadays, at thirty, an artist is considered young and brilliant, with all his future before him. Four hundred years ago many a great artist had said his last word at that age.

Apprenticeship properly so-called—by which the pupil entered the family of the master—was for two, four, or six years according to the age of the apprentice; this was succeeded by associateship, the duration of which also varied according to age, and during which the master gave remuneration to a greater or less amount (Lorenzo di Credi, Leonardo's fellow-student, received twelve florins, about £24 a year). Mastership was the final point of this long and strenuous initiation.[1]

Before studying the relations between Leonardo da Vinci and Verrocchio we will endeavour to define the character and talents of the latter.[2]

Andrea Verrocchio (born in 1435) was only seventeen years older than his pupil, an advantage which would seem relatively slight over such a precocious genius as Leonardo; we may add that the worthy Florentine sculptor had developed very slowly, and had long been absorbed by goldsmith's work and other tasks of a secondary character. Notwithstanding his growing taste for sculpture on a grand scale, he

[1] These patriarchal customs remained in force till well into the eighteenth century. Thus Sébastien Bourdon spent seven years under his first master though, it is true, he was only fourteen when he left him. In 1664, the statutes of the Paris Academy of Painting and Sculpture fixed three years as the average term of apprenticeship; each member of the Academy might only receive one pupil at a time.

[2] In my *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance* (vol. ii. p. 497) and in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (1891, vol. ii. p. 277—287) I have endeavoured to describe the evolution of Verrocchio's talent and to draw up a catalogue of his works. I here add a few notes to my former essays. If the tomb of Giovanna Tornabuoni, formerly in the church of the Minerva at Rome, is now generally recognised as a production from the studio of the master, but not by his own hand, a learned critic, Herr Bode, attributes to Verrocchio various bas-reliefs in bronze and stucco: the *Descent from the Cross* with the portrait of Duke Federigo of Urbino (?) in the church of the Carmine at Venice; the *Discord* in the South Kensington Museum, the *Judgment of Paris*, a bronze plaque in the collection of M. Gustave Dreyfus of Paris (*Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1893, pp. 77—84) These compositions are essentially loose and supple in treatment.

undertook to the last those decorative works which were the delight of his contemporaries, the Majani, the Civitali, the Ferrucci. We learn from a document of 1488 that up till the very eve of his death he was engaged upon a marble fountain for King Mathias Corvinus.[1] Herein he shows himself a true quattrocentist.

The following are a few dates by which to fix the chronology of the master's work.

In 1468—1469 we find him engaged on a bronze candelabrum for the Palazzo Vecchio. In 1472, he executed the bronze sarcophagus of Giovanni and Piero de' Medici in the sacristy of the church of San Lorenzo. In 1474, he began the mausoleum of Cardinal Forteguerra in the cathedral at Pistoja. The bronze statue of *David* (in the Museo Nazionale, Florence) brought him into evidence at last in 1476. Then came (in 1477) the small bas-relief of the *Beheading of John the Baptist*, destined for the silver altar of the Baptistery; between 1476 and 1483 the *Unbelief of S. Thomas*; finally, towards the end of a career that was all too short (Verrocchio died in 1488, at the age of fifty-three), the equestrian statue of *Colleone*, his unfinished masterpiece.

The impetus necessary to set this somewhat slow and confused intelligence soaring was—so the biographer Vasari affirms—a sight of the masterpieces of antiquity in Rome. For my part, I am inclined to attribute Verrocchio's evolution to the influence of Leonardo, so rapidly transformed from the pupil into the master of his master; an influence which caused those germs of beauty, scattered at first but sparsely through Verrocchio's work, attained to maturity in the superb group of *The Unbelief of S. Thomas* and the *Angels* of the Forteguerra monument, rising finally to the virile dignity, the grand style, of the *Colleone*.

Compared with the part played by Michelangelo, that of Verrocchio, the last great Florentine sculptor of the fifteenth century, may appear wanting in brilliance; it was assuredly not wanting in utility. Verrocchio was before all things a seeker, if not a finder; essentially incomplete in organisation, but most suggestive in spirit, he sowed more than he reaped, and produced more pupils than masterpieces. The revolution he brought about with Leonardo's co-operation

[1] Gaye, *Carteggio*, vol. i. pp. 569—570. Cf. p. 575.

was big with consequences; it aimed at nothing less than the substitution of the picturesque, sinuous, undulating, living element, for the plastic and decorative formulæ, sometimes a little over-facile, of his predecessors. Nothing, as a rule, could be less precise than his contours; the general outline is difficult to seize; above all things, he lacks the art of harmonising a statue or a bas-relief with the surrounding architecture, as is abundantly proved by his *Child*



BUST OF COLLEONE, BY VERROCCHIO.

(Piazza di SS. Giovanni e Paoli, Venice.)

with a Dolphin with its strained, improbable, and yet delicious, attitude. He is the master of puckered faces, of crumpled, tortured draperies; no one could be less inspired by the antique, as regards clearness of conception, or distinction and amplitude of form. But there is an extraordinary sincerity in his work; he makes a quiver of life run through frail limbs, reproduces the soft moisture of the skin, obtains startling effects of chiaroscuro with his complex draperies, gives warmth and colour to subjects apparently the most simple. This reaction against the cold austerity of the two Tuscan masters

most in favour at the time, Mino di Fiesole and Matteo Civitale di Lucca, was much needed, though Verrocchio has perhaps rather overshot the mark.

His favourite type of beauty is somewhat unhealthy, and not wholly devoid of affectation. Ghirlandajo's Florentine women are haughty and impassive; Botticelli's fascinating in their guileless tenderness; Verrocchio's are pensive and melancholy. Even his men—take the S. Thomas, for instance—have a plaintive disillusioned smile, the Leonardesque smile.



HEAD OF A SAINT, BY PERUGINO.
(Church of Santa Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, Florence.)

All there is of feminine, one might almost say effeminate, in Leonardo's art, the delicacy, the *morbidezza*, the suavity, appear, though often merely in embryo, in the work of Andrea Verrocchio.

To sum up, Verrocchio is the plastic artist, deeply enamoured of form, delighting in hollowing it out, in fining it down; he has none of the literary temperament of a Donatello, a Mantegna, masters who, in order to give expression to the passions that stir them, to realise their ideal, need a vast theatre, numerous actors, dramatic subjects. There is no *mise-en-scène*, no searching after recondite ideas with Verrocchio, any more than with Leonardo. The simplest subject—a child playing with a dolphin, a woman holding a flower—suffices them for the condensation of all their poetry, all their science.

A critic has spoken of the natural sympathy between Verrocchio and Leonardo. "In neither artist," says Rio, the eloquent and intolerant author of *L'Art Chrétien*, "does harmony exclude force; they

show the same admiration for the masterpieces of Greek and Roman antiquity, the same predominance of the plastic qualities, the same passion for finish of details in great as well as small compositions, the same respect for perspective and geometry in their connection with painting, the same pronounced taste for music, the same tendency to leave a work unfinished, and begin a fresh one, and, more remarkable still, the same predilection for the war-horse, the monumental horse, and all the studies appertaining thereto." But are not these points of contact rather due to chance than any intellectual relationship between the two temperaments? and may not more than one of the arguments brought forward by Rio be equally well turned against him? Verrocchio was a limited spirit, a prosaic character; Leonardo, on the other hand, was the personification of unquenchable curiosity, of aristocratic tastes, of innate grace and elegance. The one raises himself laboriously towards a higher ideal; the other brings that ideal with him into the world.

We shall see presently what was Leonardo's attitude with respect to his master's teaching. For the moment we will confine ourselves to affirming that never did artist revolt more openly against all methodical and continuous work.

Under this master—so essentially suggestive—Leonardo was thrown with several fellow-students who, without attaining his glory, achieved a brilliant place among painters. The chief of these was Perugino. Born in 1446, and consequently six years older than Leonardo, the young Umbrian artist had passed through the most severe trials before becoming known, perhaps even before winning the attention of so reputed a master as Verrocchio. For long months together, Vasari tells us, he had no bed but an old wooden chest, and was constrained to sit up for whole nights working for his living. When he placed himself under Verrocchio, or when he left him, no one knows. The very fact of a connection between the two artists has been questioned. It is true, of course, that Verrocchio only practised painting incidentally and did not shine in that branch of art; by trade, we know, he was a goldsmith; he became a sculptor from inclination. Perugino, however, differing in this from the majority of truly universal and encyclopædic artists of his time, was a painter and nothing else; why then should he have put himself under a

master to whom this branch of art was practically foreign? Moreover, if one studies closely the analogies between the productions of Verrocchio and those of his two undisputed pupils, Leonardo da Vinci and Lorenzo di Credi, and then the traces of relationship between the works of the two latter, one is forced to acknowledge that at no period of an extraordinarily prolific career does the manner of Perugino present the slightest family resemblance to that of his reputed master, or his reputed fellow-students. His warm and lustrous scale of colour, his sharply accentuated outlines, and above all, his favourite types, taken exclusively from his native country, and showing all the meagreness of the Umbrian race, are all his own. At the most, his sojourn in Florence and, later on, in Rome, familiarised him with certain accessories then in fashion, for instance, those ornaments in the antique style which he introduced lavishly in his pictures, where they proclaim their want of harmony with the rest of the composition, the sentiment of which is so unclassical.

We must be careful, however, to question the testimony of an author usually so well informed as Vasari on such evidence. If we consider the house of Verrocchio not as an artist's studio, strictly speaking, but as a laboratory, a true chemical laboratory, the arguments just brought forward lose their force. Under this ardent innovator, Perugino may well have studied, not so much the art of painting, as the science of colouring, the chemical properties of colours, their combinations, all those problems which the pupils of Verrocchio, Leonardo as well as Lorenzo di Credi, were unceasingly engaged upon.[1]

Like all his fellow-students, Perugino was rather a colourist than a draughtsman. It were fruitless to demand of him compositions brilliantly imagined or cunningly put together; warmth of colour, combined with the expression of meditation, of religious fervour—these are his sole qualities, and they are not to be despised. Perugino had,

[1] And, indeed, the group of the *Holy Family* by Perugino, in the Museum at Nancy, had its origin in the corresponding group of Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks* (Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *History of Painting in Italy*, vol. iii. p. 225). Nor, most assuredly, is it from simple caprice that Perugino introduces the portrait of Verrocchio into one of his paintings for the monastery of the Jesuits in Florence (Vasari, Milanesi's ed., vol. iii, p. 574). Such distinctions were accorded only to patrons or to friends.

in all probability, already quitted Verrocchio's *atelier* in 1475. At least, it was suggested that he should paint the great hall of the Palazzo Pubblico of Perugia at this date.



STUDY OF A HORSEMAN (ASCRIBED TO VERROCCHIO).

Leonardo, with all his numerous writings, is so chary of details as to his private affairs and connections that we know not whether the relations with Perugino, begun in Verrocchio's studio, survived the departure of the latter. The two artists must, however, have had many opportunities of meeting again later on: first of all, in Florence, where Perugino was working in 1482; then in Lombardy in 1496; then, after 1500, once more in Florence, where Perugino had set up a studio which was much frequented. Raphael's father, Giovanni Santi, has perpetuated the memory of this connection in three well-known lines, wherein he speaks of two adolescents of the same age animated by the same passions —Leonardo da Vinci and Perugino, or Pietro della Pieve, a divine painter:

> Due giovin par d'etate e par d'amori
> Leonardo da Vinci e'l Perusino,
> Pier della Pieve ch'è un divin pittore.

Yet another Umbrian, Fiorenzo di Lorenzo of Perugia, appears to have worked in Verrocchio's studio. His first dated work, the altarpiece in the Gallery of Perugia (1472) shows him, at least, to have been influenced by the Florentine master.[1]



STUDY OF A HORSEMAN (ASCRIBED TO VERROCCHIO).

Lorenzo di Andrea Credi (1459—1537), the son and grandson of goldsmiths, was placed, when quite a child, under Verrocchio's tuition,

[1] Schmarsow, *Pinturricchio in Rom*, p. 5. Bode, *Italienische Bildhauer*, p. 151. Ulmann, *Sandro Botticelli*, p. 38.

and was still working under him, at the age of twenty-one, content with the modest salary of one florin (about £2) a month. He was living at that time (1480) with his mother "Mona Lisa," a widow aged sixty years. His two sisters, Lucrezia and Lena, were married. The fortune of the little household consisted of a tiny property at Casarotta.

A tender friendship united Lorenzo and his master, whom he accompanied later to Venice, to assist in the execution of the statue



LEONARDO'S FIRST DATED LANDSCAPE.

(Uffizi, Florence.)

of Colleone, and who, at his death, named him his executor. His was a nature profoundly contemplative and religious: he was an impassioned follower of Savonarola, as were the great majority of Florentine artists; but, after the fall of the prophet, discouragement followed on boundless enthusiasm. His will bears witness to his sense of contrition: after having assured the future of his old woman-servant, to whom he left his bedding, and an annuity in kind; after having made certain donations to his niece and to the daughter of a friend, a goldsmith; he directed that the rest of his fortune should go to the brotherhood of the indigent poor, and that his

obsequies should be as simple as possible: "Quo minimo sumptu fieri potest."

Seven years younger than Leonardo, Lorenzo soon came under the influence of his fellow-student. No one, affirms Vasari, could better imitate the latter's manner; one of Leonardo's pictures, in particular, he copied so perfectly that it was impossible to distinguish the copy from the original. This picture, as well as another after Verrocchio, went to Spain.

Lorenzo was a slow and laborious spirit, rather than a lively and original genius. It is said that he prepared his oils himself, and with his own hand ground his colours to an impalpable dust. After having tried the gradations of each colour upon his palette—he made use of as many as thirty shades to the colour—he forbade his servants to sweep his studio, lest one speck of dust should dim the transparency and polish of his pictures, which, in this respect, are like enamels. He was distinguished for deep religious convictions; but of what avail are convictions to the artist or the poet without talent, the gift of communicating his emotions to others?

Nothing could be more limited than the range of Lorenzo's compositions; they are either *Holy Conversations* or *Madonnas*, these last usually circular in form. About the only secular picture known as his is his *Venus*, in the Uffizi Gallery. His figures are, for the most part, heavy: the Infant Jesus in particular being remarkable for the inordinate size of the head, and the total absence of expression. His landscape, indeed, has higher qualities, thanks chiefly to the colour, in which firmness has not destroyed harmony. Lorenzo practised portraiture as well as religious painting. If the portraits attributed to him in the Louvre are indeed his, Leonardo's fellow-student must have possessed the power of subtle characterisation in the very highest degree. A few touches, as quiet as they are exact, and of incomparable lightness, suffice to fix the physiognomy, and suggest the soul of his model, on a sheet of paper, usually rose-tinted. The École des Beaux Arts in Paris possesses a portrait of an old man, in body-colour, more closely akin to Lorenzo's pictures, and marked by the same laboured handling: this is the sign manual of the master.

It is not impossible that Leonardo may also have met another artist, much his senior, in Verrocchio's studio, where he was working rather as an assistant than a pupil—I mean Sandro Botticelli. He was one of the few contemporary masters of whom our hero makes mention in his writings, and he adds to the name the significant qualification "il nostro Botticelli." He invokes Botticelli's testimony, however, only to criticise him. "That artist," he says, "is not universal who does not show an equal taste for all branches of painting. For instance, one who does not care for landscape, will declare that it is a matter for short and simple study only. Our Botticelli was wont to say that this study was vain, for you had but to throw a sponge soaked with different colours against a wall, and you at once obtained upon that wall a stain, wherein you might distinguish a landscape. And indeed," Leonardo adds, "this artist painted very poor landscapes."[1] The end of this demonstration deserves to be quoted. In it Leonardo unconsciously criticises that very species of picturesque pantheism, those optical illusions to which no one sacrificed more than he did himself. "It is true," he declares, "that he who seeks them will find in that stain many inventions, such as human faces, various animals, battles, rocks, oceans, clouds or forests, and other objects of the kind. It is the same with the sound of bells, wherein each person can distinguish whatever words he pleases. But although these stains furnish forth divers subjects, they do not show us how to terminate a particular point."[2] How often must Leonardo have let his vision and his imagination float thus in the clouds or on the waves, striving to grasp in their infinite combinations the image he was pursuing, or, by an opposite effect, endeavouring to give form and substance to the undulating, intangible masses!

Taking into consideration Leonardo's facetious humour, his delight in mystification—there was a touch of the Mephistopheles in him—and his extravagant habits, it is highly probable that he formed a close connection with a band of hare-brained young fellows who frequented

[1] See Ulman, *Sandro Botticelli*, pp. 37–38. I shall have occasion to return to the numerous motives borrowed by Botticelli from Leonardo: in the *Virgin of the Magnificat* (see the *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1897, p. 3, *et seq*), in the *Nativity* of the National Gallery, in the *Adoration of the Magi* of the Uffizi.

[2] *Trattato della Pittura*, chap. lx. Piero di Cosimo attempted, like Leonardo, to form figures with clouds. (See his biography in Vasari.)

Verrocchio's studio, and whose wild doings often scandalised the good citizens of Florence,[1] and formed a characteristic trait of Florentine manners. For if in the Umbrian schools the embryo painter (such as Raphael, for instance) had all the gentleness and timidity of a girl, in Florence, from Giotto's time, practical joking never ceased to form an integral part of the education of an artist.



VERROCCHIO'S HEAD OF DAVID.
(Musée National of Florence.)

The most brilliant of these fellow-students, who cultivated art as amateurs rather than as professionals, was Atalante dei Migliarotti, born in Florence in 1466 of an unlawful union, like Leonardo himself, which was perhaps a bond the more between them. Like Leonardo, he excelled upon the lute, and it was in the character of musician, and not as a painter, that he accompanied his friend to the court of Lodovico Moro. His reputation increased so greatly that in 1490 the Marquis of Mantua, wishing to have the *Orfeo* of Poliziano represented, called upon Atalante to fill the principal part. Later on,

[1] A calumny long rested on the memory of Leonardo, which was only dissipated when at last the keepers of the Archives of Florence were prevailed upon to give publicity to the documents connected with certain law proceedings. An anonymous person had denounced him, with three other Florentines, as having had immoral relations with a certain Jacopo Salterello, aged seventeen, apparently apprenticed to a goldsmith. In consequence, the accused appeared, on April 9, 1476, before the tribunal sitting at San Marco. They were all acquitted, on condition that they should come up again after a fresh enquiry. At the second hearing, which took place June 7, 1476, the case against them was definitively dismissed. We see therefore that his contemporaries had already exonerated him. (*Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1896, pp. 313—315.)



STUDY OF A HEAD BY LEONARDO FOR VERROCCHIO'S "DAVID."

(Weimar Museum.)

having sown his wild oats, Atalante, like so many others, resigned himself to a subordinate position, and became a kind of bureaucrat — sorry climax to a career that had begun so brilliantly! In 1513, the same year in which Leonardo made his triumphal entry into Rome surrounded by a constellation of pupils, Atalante filled the post of inspector of architectural works at the Papal Court. It was, at least, a last slight bond between him and Art; twenty-two years later, in 1535, on the eve of his death, he was still occupying this obscure situation, which left him ample leisure to meditate upon the follies of his youth.

As to Zoroastro di Peretola, the pupil, and not the fellow-student of Leonardo, we shall consider him later on.

The reader knows something of the atmosphere that reigned in Verrocchio's studio. Let us now endeavour to trace its action upon so impressionable a mind as that of the youthful Leonardo. First and foremost, the beginner found himself constrained to submit to a certain discipline. How did he bend to the yoke? Did he bind himself to the programme which he recommended later on to his own disciples, and which he laid down as follows?—"This is what the apprentice should learn at the beginning: he should first learn perspective, then the proportions of all things; after this, he should make drawings after good masters in order to accustom himself to giving the right proportions to the limbs; and after that, from nature, in order that he may verify for himself the principles he has learned. Further, he should, for some time, carefully examine the works of different masters, and finally accustom himself to the practice of his art" (*Trattato della Pittura*, chap. xlvii.).

Further (chaps. lxxxi.), Leonardo lays stress upon the importance of independence and originality: "I say to painters, Never imitate the manner of another; for thereby you become the grandson instead of the son of nature. And, truly, models are found in such abundance in nature that it is far better to go to them than to masters. I do not say this to those who strive to become rich by their art, but to those who desire glory and honour thereby."

A noble programme, and, what is more, a noble example! The

long career of Leonardo da Vinci is a standing witness to the fact that, from youth to old age, he set glory and honour before riches.

With such tendencies as these, the models created by his predecessors would have but little influence upon the youthful beginner. "He was most assiduous," Vasari tells us, "in working from nature, and would sometimes make rough models in clay, over which he then laid moist rags coated with clay; these he afterwards carefully copied on superfine Rheims canvas or on prepared linen, colouring them in black and white with the point of the brush to produce illusion." (Several of these studies have come down to us.) "He drew, besides, on paper," Vasari adds, "with so much zeal and talent that no one could rival him in delicacy of rendering." Vasari possessed one of these heads in chalk and *camaïeu*, which he pronounced divine.

However, Leonardo soon abandoned this practice. In the *Trattato della Pittura* (chap. DXXXVIII) he strongly advises students not to make use of models over which paper or thin leather has been drawn, but, on the contrary, to sketch their draperies from nature, carefully noting differences of texture.[1]

However refractory Leonardo may have been to contemporary influences, it was impossible that there should have been no interchange of ideas and no affinity of style between him and his master. The better to make them understood, I shall compare the various stages in the development of Verrocchio's art, as I have endeavoured to define them (pp. 22—26), with some of the more salient landmarks in the evolution of his immortal pupil.

We do not know for certain when he entered Verrocchio's studio, but it was long before 1472,[2] for at that date, being then twenty years of age, he was received into the guild of painters of Florence;

[1] Among the artists of the sixteenth century who made use of clay models similar to those of Leonardo, we may mention Garofalo and Tintoretto (see my *L'Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, vol. iii. p. 148).

[2] Müller-Walde puts the date at 1466, which is quite within the range of probability, Leonardo being then fourteen years old.

in 1473, as is proved by a study to which I shall revert immediately, he already used the pen with perfect mastery; we may add that the intercourse between the two artists was kept up till 1476 at least.

Shall I be accused of temerity if, armed with these dates, I venture to maintain, contrary to common opinion, that between pupil and master there was an interchange of ideas particularly advantageous to the latter; that Leonardo gave to Verrocchio as much, if not more, than he received from him? By the time that a fragrance of grace and beauty began to breathe from Verrocchio's work, Leonardo was no



THREE DANCERS.
(Accademia, Venice.)

longer an apprentice, but a consummate master. The *Baptism of Christ*, to which I shall refer later, is not the only work in which the collaboration of the two artists is palpable, and the contrast between the two manners self-evident; this contrast is still more striking between the works of Verrocchio which are anterior to Leonardo's entry into his studio, and those he produced later.

In their drawings, we have an invaluable criterion whereby to measure the respective value of the work of the master and that of his disciple. It is true that Morelli and his followers have excluded from the works of Verrocchio the twenty-five sheets of the *Sketch Book*

so long attributed to him. (In the Louvre, at the École des Beaux Arts, at Chantilly, etc.) We will accept their verdict, and only take into consideration the *Five Genii at Play* of the Louvre, and the *Head of an Angel* in the Uffizi, declared to be ultra-authentic by Morelli[1] and by Gronau.[2] Even here it must be admitted that the execution is cramped and poor, the types either unhealthy or undecided, (after the manner of certain compositions in the *Raphael Sketch Book* in the Accademia of Venice); in short, the drawings are the very antithesis of Leonardo's. To aver that the *Sketch Book* is not by Verrocchio's hand can add but little to his reputation. The drawings are not sensibly worse than those which Morelli and Gronau ascribe to him.



SKETCH, SCHOOL OF VERROCCHIO.
(The Louvre.)

Let us now compare the earliest efforts of Leonardo with these archaic works. A curious pen and ink landscape, with the inscription: "Di di sca Maria della Neve, a di 2 d'aghosto 1473" (the day of S. Mary of the Snow, August 2, 1473), dates from 1473, when Leonardo was twenty-one. It represents a plain between mountains, two, those which bound it to right and left of the foreground, rising almost perpendicularly. On the one to the left stands a town surrounded by ramparts flanked with towers.[3] All around are trees with

[1] *Die Galerien zu München und Dresden*, pp. 350–351. (English translation by Miss Ffoulkes, 1893, p. 271.)

[2] *Jahrbuch der k. Pr. Kunstsammlungen*, 1896, i.

[3] One of the erudite writers who has rendered such valuable service in the interpretation of Leonardo's literary works claims to have discovered in this landscape a view of the Rigi, on which, indeed, there is a convent dedicated to S. Mary of the

smooth trunks and parallel branches, something like pines : the type, as we know, so dear to the Primitives. The composition has none of the clumsiness of Verrocchio's ; the most insignificant details acquire an incomparable delicacy and smoothness under that cunning hand. Nevertheless, the landscape (evidently a study from nature) is wanting in decision and in intention ; there is something vague about it, as in the vast majority of the productions of the genius which lent itself with such difficulty to any precise and categorical scheme of expression.

The drawing of 1473 furnishes us with another valuable landmark : Leonardo had already adopted his peculiar system of writing from right to left, after the manner of the Orientals.

Besides these dates, which are fixed by figures, there are others which may be determined by peculiarities of style. Though bearing no chronological inscription by Leonardo's hand, the two studies I am about to mention belong none the less to a well-defined period of his career ; if, hitherto, they have not attracted the attention of the historians of the master, the question once raised, no one will deny that they must have been executed at the beginning of his term of apprenticeship, and in Verrocchio's studio.

The first, now at Weimar, shows us the head of a youth, in every point the counterpart of Verrocchio's *David* (1476), but less harsh, more rounded, the mouth less compressed, the cheek-bones and the throat less angular—in a word, the type bears the Leonardesque imprint in every particular. For the rest, we note the same curled locks as in the statue, save that the clusters, which are more abundant, fall lower on the forehead ; the same long eyes. We have here, probably, a model treated at one time by the master, at another by the pupil ; where one is dry and restless, the other is all

Snows. But de Geymüller has objected, and with reason, that these mountains have not the Alpine character ; that the heights of the foreground are much lower than the Rigi ; finally, that the latter has never had a city bearing the smallest resemblance to the one in Leonardo's drawing upon one of its slopes. Moreover, there is nothing to show that, at this period, Leonardo had crossed the Alps. In Baron Liphart's opinion, this drawing represents a view of the Apennines, near Lucca. (Müller-Walde, *Leonardo da Vinci*, p. 64.)

suavity. Here, if I am not mistaken, is the point where that striving after beauty begins which, after a certain moment, makes itself felt in Verrocchio's chief works: his *Incredulity of S. Thomas*,[1] wherein the saint, with his serene and benign countenance, is worthy to sit among the Apostles of the *Last Supper* in Santa Maria delle Grazie, the *Angels* of the Forteguerra tomb, and the *Lady with the Bouquet* of the Uffizi Gallery, that meagre bust which is nevertheless so distinguished and fascinating in expression.

Another study of *Three dancing Girls* and a sketch of a head (Accademia at Venice), offers the same points of resemblance, and the same differences. Here we see again the crumpled draperies so dear to Verrocchio, his abruptness of movement, his stiffness of foreshortening, notably in the dancer in the background holding a scarf over her head like a child with a skipping-rope.[2] At the same time there is much of the grace peculiar to Leonardo; one of these dishevelled Bacchantes, in classic costume, is remarkable for her smile, her deep-eyed gaze, the curve of her arm, the rhythm of her gesture. The technique—the drawing is executed in pen-and-ink—recalls the hand of Verrocchio, but it has a freedom and charm unknown to that artist. A curious drawing among those ascribed to Verrocchio in the Louvre (His de la Salle collection, No. 118), contains a few words written backwards, in which M. Charles Ravaisson-Mollien does not hesitate to recognise Leonardo's writing.[3] Though the Madonna of this sheet is of a somewhat mean and archaic type, not without analogies to that of the Umbrian school, the slight sketch of the youth (S. John the Baptist?) has a grace and freedom that suggest Leonardo.

[1] Great was the impression produced by this group when it was installed, on June 21, 1483, in one of the tabernacles of Or San Michele. A contemporary, Landucci, declares that never before had so beautiful a head of Christ been seen: "la più bella testa del Salvatore ch' ancora si sia fatta." (*Diario fiorentino dal* 1450 *al* 1516; Florence, 1883, p. 45.)

[2] This figure may be compared with the *Angels* in the Thiers collection at the Louvre, those of the Forteguerra monument, and those of the ciborium of the church at Monteluce, which Venturi attributes to a pupil of Verrocchio, Francesco di Simone Ferrucci of Fiesole (*Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1892, p. 376).

[3] *Mémoires de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1885, p. 132—145.

It was impossible that Verrocchio should not have employed the most brilliant of his followers in his works. Here again, the pupil revealed his crushing superiority.

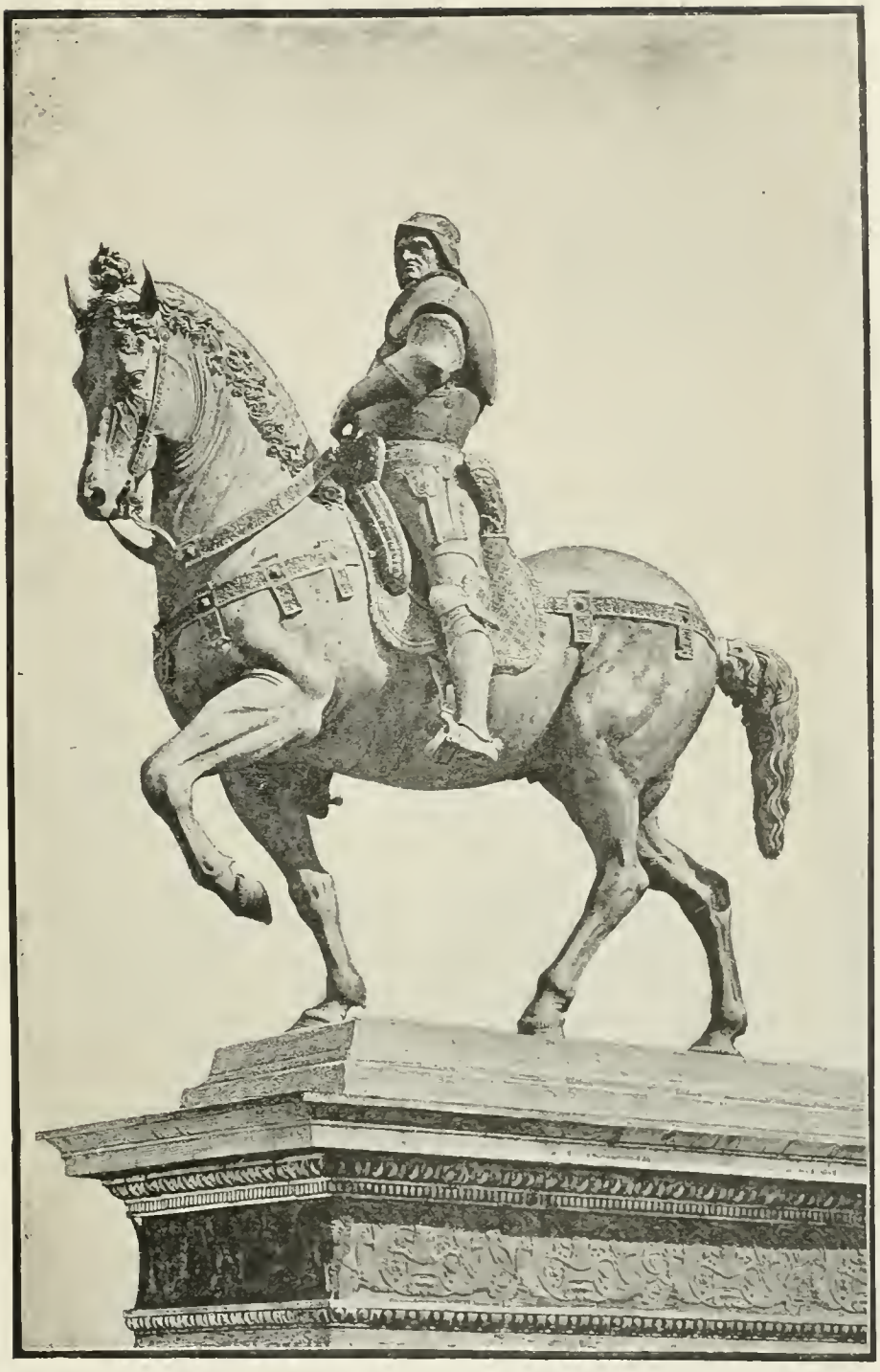
The *Baptism of Christ*, in the Accademia of Florence, gives us certain valuable indications as to the collaboration of the two artists. Vasar tells us, that after having seen the kneeling angel, painted by Leonardo at the side of the Christ, Verrocchio, in despair, threw down his brushes and gave up painting.



HEAD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, FROM VERROCCHIO'S "BAPTISM OF CHRIST."
(Accademia, Florence.)

A careful study of the picture confirms the probability of this story. Nothing could be more unsatisfactory, more meagre than the two chief figures, Christ and S. John; without distinction of form, or poetry of expression, they are simply laborious studies of some aged and unlovely model, some wretched mechanic whom Verrocchio got to pose for him. (Charles Perkins justly criticises the hardness of the lines, the stiffness of the style, the absence of all sentiment.) Look, on the other hand, at the consummate youthful grace of the angel tradition assigns to Leonardo! How the lion reveals himself in the first stroke of his paw, and with what excellent reason did Verrocchio confess himself vanquished! It is not impossible that the background was also the work of the young beginner; it is a fantastic landscape, not unlike that of the *Mona Lisa*. The brown scale of colour, too, resembles that which Leonardo adopted, notably in the *Saint Jerome*, of the Vatican Gallery, in the *Adoration of the Magi* of the Uffizi (which, however, is only a cartoon), in the *Virgin of the Rocks*, and in the *Mona Lisa*.

To sum up, I will say that Leonardo never dreamt, and for



STATUE OF COLLEONE, BY VERROCCHIO. (THE BASE BY LEOPARDI.)

(Piazza di SS. Giovanni e Paolo at Venice.)

excellent reason, of looking to Verrocchio for ready-made formulæ like those by which Raphael profited so long in Perugino's studio. It was rather he who opened up to his astonished master unsuspected sources of beauty, which the latter scarcely had time to turn to account.[1]

Several German critics have gone so far as to determine Leonardo's share in his master's pictures to the minutest details. For my own part, I make no pretensions to such powers of divination, and am content to draw my conclusions from facts that are obvious to all open and impartial minds. Signor Morelli, indeed, maintains that the *Baptism of Christ* is entirely by Verrocchio's hand.[2]

Who shall decide in this conflict of opinions? The reader must forgive me if I respect a tradition that agrees so well with the testimony of the work itself, and continue to believe in the collaboration of master and pupil.

A sketch in the Turin Museum shows us Leonardo preparing the figure of the angel, whose beauty astounded his contemporaries.

Another drawing, in the Windsor Collection (reproduced in our Plate 2), a study of drapery on a kneeling figure in profile to the left, also has analogies with the angel in the *Baptism*.

It may not be superfluous to point out that Lorenzo di Credi reproduced certain details of the *Baptism of Christ* in his picture of the same subject in the Church of San Domenico, near Florence (Photograph by Alinari, No. 7726). There is also a strong likeness between the angel of Verrocchio's *Baptism* and the Virgin's attendant angel in Domenico Ghirlandajo's picture in the National Gallery of London.[3] Ghirlandajo's Infant Jesus, too, with his plump, rounded contours, recalls or foreshadows the type given to the child by Leonardo.

[1] An Italian critic, Signor Tumiati, has recently vindicated Verrocchio's claims to the beautiful bas-relief in the church of San Giacomo at Rome, signed "Opus Andreæ," which Schmarsow attributed to Andrea da Milano. But this Madonna and Child seem to me too pure and classic a work for our master. It has too little in common with his restless and very individual manner. *L'Arte*, 1898, p. 218—219.

[2] *Die Galerien zu Berlin*, p. 35 *et seq.*

[3] Ascribed, in the National Gallery catalogue, to the School of Verrocchio.—Ed.

A terra-cotta model, a study for one of the two angels on Cardinal Forteguerra's tomb in the Cathedral at Prato (see p. 39), may also perhaps have been the result of collaboration between master and pupil. "If they were not by Verrocchio," says M. Louis Gonse, "these angels (now in the Thiers Collection at the Louvre), might well be by the divine hand of Leonardo himself, so strongly does the Leonardesque sentiment that permeates them recall the figures of the angels in the *Virgin of the Rocks*, and the *Baptism of Christ*."



STUDY OF A HORSEMAN.
(Windsor Library)



2

The Angels from Verrocchio's Picture of the "Baptism of Christ."

(The Angel on the right by Leonardo, the Angel on the left by Verrocchio.)

(ACCADEMIA DELLE BELLE ARTI, FLORENCE.)



Printed [illegible]



THE ANNUNCIATION (ATTRIBUTED TO LEONARDO).

(The Louvre.)

CHAPTER II

FIRST ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS: THE SHIELD—THE MEDUSA—THE FALL—PICTURES ASCRIBED TO LEONARDO—THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LOUVRE AND THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE UFFIZI—THE PORTRAIT OF BANDINI BARONCELLI.



STUDY FOR THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

(Collection, P. Valton.)

AT the beginning of Leonardo's career, as in that of every great artist, we meet with the legend of a first masterpiece. "A farmer," so the story runs, "had asked Ser Piero da Vinci to get a shield he had made out of the wood of a fig-tree on his property decorated in Florence. Ser Piero charged his son to paint something on it, but without telling him where it came from. Perceiving that the shield was warped and very roughly cut, Leonardo straightened it out by heat, and sent it to a turner to plane and polish. After giving it a coating of plaster, and arranging it to his satisfaction, he bethought him of a subject suitable for painting upon it—something that should be of a nature to strike terror to any who might attack the owner of this piece of armour, after the manner of the Gorgon of old. To this end he collected in a place, to which he alone had access, a number of crickets, grasshoppers, bats, serpents, lizards, and other strange creatures; by mingling these together he evolved a most horrible and terrifying

monster, whose noisome breath filled the air with flames as it issued from a rift among gloomy rocks, black venom streaming from its open jaws, its eyes darting fire, its nostrils belching forth smoke. The young artist suffered severely meanwhile from the stench arising from all these dead animals, but his ardour enabled him to endure it bravely to the end. The work being completed, and neither his father nor the peasant coming to claim the shield, Leonardo reminded his father to have it removed. Ser Piero therefore repaired one morning to the room occupied by his son, and knocked at the door ; it was opened by Leonardo, who begged him to wait a moment before entering ; whereupon the young man retired, and placing the shield on an easel in the window, so arranged the curtains that the light fell upon the painting in dazzling brilliancy. Ser Piero, forgetting the errand upon which he had come, experienced at the first glance a violent shock, never thinking that this was nothing but a shield, and, still less, that he was looking at a painting. He fell back a step in alarm, but Leonardo restrained him. 'I see, father,' he said, 'that this picture produces the effect I hoped for ; take it, then, and convey it to its owner.' Ser Piero was greatly amazed, and lauded the strange device adopted by his son. He then went secretly and purchased another shield, ornamented with a heart pierced by an arrow, and this he gave to the peasant, who, nothing doubting, ever after regarded him with gratitude. Afterwards, Ser Piero sold Leonardo's shield secretly to some merchants of Florence for 100 ducats, and they, in their turn, easily obtained 300 for it from the Duke of Milan."[1]

The biographer has obviously embellished the story, but there is nothing to authorise us in supposing that it is not founded on fact, such pleasantries being extremely characteristic of Leonardo. Who knows but that this shield served him as a passport, when he went to seek his fortune at the Court of the Sforzi ?

As a pendant to the shield there was, according to the biographers, a picture representing a Gorgon, surrounded by serpents intertwined, and knotted in a thousand folds—"una testa di Megera con mirabilj et varj agruppamenti di serpi."

[1] Vasari ——. Lomazzo confirms this story, saying that the "rotella" was sent to Lodovico il Moro. (*Trattato della Pittura*, book vii. chap. xxxii.)

This picture was long identified with the one in the Uffizi. But the oracles of Art have now decided that this could not have been produced till long after the death of da Vinci, and that it is the work of some cinquecentist, painting from Vasari's description. We know, however, from the testimony of an anonymous biographer[1] that a *Medusa* painted by Leonardo was included in the collections of Cosimo de' Medici about the middle of the sixteenth century. Cosimo's interventory is not less precise; it mentions "un quadro con una Furia infernale del Vinci semplice."[2]

The cartoon of *The Fall* has shared the fate of the *Medusa*. Here again we have to content ourselves with Vasari's description, corroborated by the testimony of the biographer edited by Milanesi. "A cartoon was entrusted to Leonardo, from which a *portière* in cloth of gold and silver was to be executed in Flanders for the King of Portugal. The cartoon represented Adam and Eve in the garden of Paradise at the moment of their disobedience. Leonardo made a design of several animals in a meadow studded with flowers, which he rendered with incredible accuracy and truth, painting them in monochrome, with touches of ceruse. The leaves and branches of a fig-tree are executed with such loving care that, verily, one can scarcely fathom the patience of the artist. There is also a palm, to which he has imparted such elasticity by the curves of its foliage as none other could have attained to but himself. Unhappily, the *portière* was never executed, and the cartoon is now in the fortunate house of the magnificent Ottavio de' Medici, to whom it was given a short time ago by Leonardo's uncle."

Thus, from his earliest youth, Leonardo showed a taste for bizarre subjects: the monster painted on the shield, the Gorgon surrounded with serpents, so little in harmony with the prevailing taste of contemporary Italian artists, which was becoming more and more literary. Thus in *The Fall* we see him engaged upon the reproduction of the very smallest details of vegetation. His burning curiosity searched into problems of the most intricate, not to say

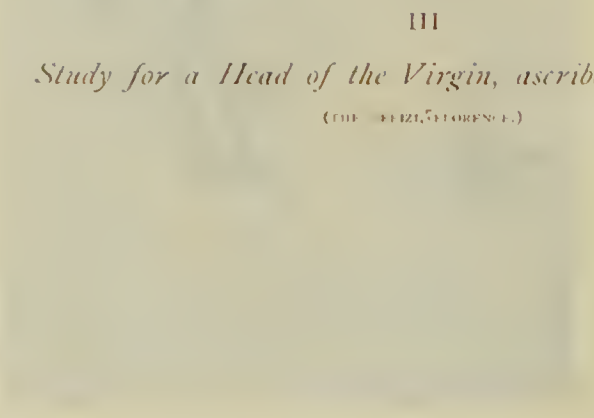
[1] Milanesi, *Documenti inediti riguardanti Leonardo da Vinci*, Florence, 1872, p. 11. Fabriczy, *Il Codice dell' Anonimo gaddiano*, Florence, 1893, p. 77.

[2] See my *Collections d'Antiques formées par les Médicis au xvi^e^. siècle*, p. 61.

repulsive order. M. Taine has expressed this admirably in one of his penetrating pieces of analysis, in which he teaches us more about the genius of a master in a few lines than we learn from whole volumes by others; we will set it down as it stands, for it would be impossible to put it better. "It happens now and then," writes the author of the *Voyage en Italie*, "that among these young athletes haughty as Greek gods, we light upon some beautiful ambiguous youth, of feminine mould, his slender form contorted into an attitude of languorous coquetry, akin to the androgynes of the Imperial epoch, and like them, giving evidence of a more advanced but less healthy, an almost morbid art, so eager after perfection, so insatiable of delight, that, not content to accord strength to man and delicacy to woman, it must needs confound and multiply the beauty of the two sexes by a strange fusion, and lose itself in the dreams and researches of the ages of decadence and immorality. There is no saying to what the protracted striving after exquisite and profound sensations may not finally lead." Leonardo was not one of those limited spirits for whom nature is nothing but a convenient source of picturesque themes; he embraced it in all its infinite variety, and it was perhaps because he studied its deformed and hideous aspects that he was enabled to show us its purest, most ideal beauty.



STUDY OF HEADS, DATED 1478.
(Uffizi, Florence.)



III

Study for a Head of the Virgin, ascribed to Leonardo.

(THE UFFIZI, FLORENCE.)



Modern criticism, inconsolabe at the loss of these early master pieces, has ingeniously endeavoured to fill up so regrettable a gap in Leonardo's work by a series of productions which undoubtedly reveal the influence of the young artist, but which have perhaps been too hastily accepted as his own.

One of the earliest and most interesting among these is the *Annunciation* in the Louvre, in the gallery overlooking the river. This picture, which is of very small dimensions (14 cm. high by 59 cm. wide, with figures 15 cm. high), was formerly arched at the top but is now rectangular. It was attributed to Lorenzo di Credi until Bayersdorfer, whose opinion was adopted by Morelli, proposed to give it the name of Leonardo. The curly-headed angel kneeling in a sort of ecstasy in front of the Virgin, suggests the one in the *Annunciation* of the Uffizi, to which we shall presently refer. The Virgin, too, presents the Leonardesque type, with an added touch of *morbidezza*. But this type, as we know, was adopted by Boltraffio, and many other Milanese pupils of the master. Although the impasto is very fat, the accessories —the desk in front of which the Virgin is seated, the seats near it, etc.—are rendered with infinite care. The little piece of landscape in the background is beautiful, tranquil and imposing. The trees, unfortunately, have blackened.



BUST OF S. JOHN THE BAPTIST (ASCRIBED TO LEONARDO).
(South Kensington Museum.)

The *Annunciation* of the Louvre differs from that of the Uffizi

firstly in its dimensions, its narrowness being quite abnormal, and secondly, in the attitude of the Virgin, who is here in profile, while in the Uffizi picture she faces three-quarters to the front. This Virgin has been compared with a study of a head in the Uffizi (see our full-page Plate).[1] Another head, three-quarters face, in the library at Windsor, is also akin to it. On the other hand, the angel of the Louvre suggests that of the Uffizi in every way. The attitude is identical; he kneels on one knee, the right hand raised, the left falling to the level of the knee.

The *Annunciation* of the Uffizi Gallery has been restored to Leonardo by authoritative connoisseurs such as Baron von Liphart, Dr. Bode, and Baron de Geymuller, while others, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, and Morelli (agreeing for once!) persist in ascribing it to Ridolfo Ghirlandajo. The picture, which once adorned the Convent of Monte Oliveto near Florence, is in every respect worthy of Leonardo's magic brush; the grace and freshness of the figures, deliciously juvenile with their coquettishly curled hair and their exquisitely arranged draperies,[2] the finish and poetic charm of the landscape, a sea-port—perhaps, according to de Geymüller, Porto Pisano—with beacons and a kind of jetty, backed by mountains of improbable height: all are arguments in favour of Leonardo's authorship. The angel kneeling on one knee recalls the attitudes, so full of compunction, beloved of Fra Angelico; it also resembles, in certain points, Lorenzo di Credi's angel in his *Annunciation* in the Uffizi, saving that in this latter work the drawing is weaker and rounder.

In spite of the great charm of this composition, we may be permitted to hesitate as to its authenticity, and that for various reasons.

[1] Müller-Walde (Fig. 66) connects this head with the *Resurrection* in the Berlin Gallery.

[2] It was assuredly thus, in a manner at once affecting and devout, that Leonardo considered the *Annunciation* should be represented. In his *Treatise on Painting* (chap. viii.) he criticises the artists who give exaggerated movement to such a subject. "I have recently seen," he says, "an angel, who, in announcing her destiny to the Virgin, appeared to be driving her from her chamber, for his movements expressed the indignation one might feel in the presence of one's worst enemy, and Our Lady seemed ready to throw herself in desperation from the window."

It is not impossible that the study of drapery for a seated figure facing the spectator, and slightly turned to the left (Louvre) may relate to the Virgin of the *Annunciation*, despite the difference in detail. So too, the drapery of the kneeling figure, turned to the right (Uffizi) may be that of the angel (Müller-Walde, fig. 191).

The *Annunciation* has a precision, I mean a rigour and firmness of outline, which is rarely found in the authentic works of Leonardo, who banished architecture as much as possible from his compositions (his only exception to this rule being his *Last Supper*), in order to leave a wider field for landscape and aërial perspective. The presence of the magnificent classical pedestal which serves the Virgin for a reading-desk is also calculated to inspire some doubt. Would Leonardo, who rarely copied Greek or Roman sculptures, have been likely to reproduce this with such elaboration? Let us be content to admire a youthful and exquisite work which offers several points of contact with Leonardo's style, and refrain from attempts to solve a problem calculated to exercise the sagacity of the critics for a long time to come.

Following on the two *Annunciations*, if we are to believe certain connoisseurs, comes a Virgin and Child, acquired in 1889 by the Munich Pinacothek, and now known to fame under the title of the *Virgin with the Carnation*.[1] The history of this little picture (it measures 40 × 60 centimetres only) is quite a romance. Sold at Günzburg for the modest sum of a guinea, it was bought again almost immediately by the Pinacothek for £40, and instantly declared to be a masterpiece. It is a most enthralling work, combining a grand and dignified solemnity with extreme finish and consummate modelling; a penetrating poetic charm breathes from the picture. If the Child, with its puffy cheeks, approaches somewhat too closely to the rather unsympathetic type created by Lorenzo di Credi (see No. 1616 in the same collection), the Virgin captivates us by the grace of her features, and the elegance of her costume: a pale blue robe of very complicated modulations; red bodice and sleeves; yellow scarf falling over the right shoulder and on to the knees. The landscape is vaporous, as is so often the case in Leonardo's works. But the impasto is rich in the flesh-tints (particularly those of the Child) which incline to blue.

The attribution of this picture to Leonardo was not undisputed. M. Emile Molinier, pointing out a replica of the *Virgin with the*

[1] Bayersdorfer.—De Geymüller, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1890, vol. ii. pp. 97—106 Koopmann, *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 1890, pp. 118—122.

Carnation in the Louvre, has insisted on the Flemish character of the composition. I must, however, draw attention to the fact that, compared with the copy in the Louvre, which, though absolutely faithful, is without force or warmth, the Munich picture produces the effect of a diamond beside a piece of glass. More recently, Herr Rieffel too pronounced in favour of its northern origin; he is disposed to look for the author of the *Virgin of the Carnation* among the painters of the Low Countries or the Lower Rhine, who sought inspiration in Italy and from the Italian masters at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Morelli, whose appreciations — frequently hyper-subtle — should be received with extreme caution, unhesitatingly attributed the Munich picture to a mediocre Flemish painter, working from some drawings of Verrocchio's. Finally, Herr W. Schmidt puts forward Lorenzo di Credi as its author.[1] For my part, I will add that what seems to me the main argument against Leonardo's authorship is the type of



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."
(Bonnat Collection, Paris.)

[1] See the *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1890.—*Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*. 1891, p. 217—220.—Morelli, *Die Galerien zu München und Dresden*, pp. 349—356.—*Zeitschrift für bild. Kunst.*, 1893, p. 139—141.

The *Virgin with the Carnation* has been connected with a drawing in the Dresden Gallery attributed to Leonardo and containing a study for a Virgin, a half-length figure. But it is by no means clear that this drawing is by the hand of Leonardo. Morelli claims it for Verrocchio, and the head has certainly something very poor about it, notably in the modelling of the nose. It offers as many points of divergence as of contact with the Munich picture, and therefore proves nothing either for or against the authenticity of the latter.

Critics have even gone so far as to attribute to Leonardo the miserable little picture, in the same Gallery, of the Virgin seated and holding out a blackberry to the Child, lying nude upon her knees, while the infant S. John the Baptist adores him with uplifted hands (No. 13). This picture appears to me hardly worthy of Lorenzo di Credi, to whom Herr Woermann ascribes it (*Katalog der K. Gemäldegalerie zu Dresden*, 1887). According to Morelli, its author was a Flemish imitator of Lorenzo di Credi.

the Virgin, which is one never met with in his pictures ; and also the absence of that contrast between the lights and shadows, so striking in the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Virgin of the Rocks*, the *S. Jerome*, and the *Mona Lisa*.

A picture—very much damaged—in the Berlin Museum, the *Resurrection of Christ between S. Leonard and S. Lucy*,[1] is also an early work by Leonardo, according to Dr. Bode.[2] Dr. Bode notes, as particularly characteristic of Leonardo's manner, the contrast of the warm golden and red-brown tones with the cool blue-green tints, the chiaro-scuro, the "pastoso" of the oil-colours, and the fine net-work which covers the carnations. There are several drawings of absolute authenticity, Dr. Bode adds, which served as preparatory studies for this picture. These are, first, the portrait of a woman at Windsor ; the model here is represented with downcast eyes ; a large drawing in silver point, a study for the robe of Christ (Malcolm Collection in the British Museum) ; lastly, a pen-and-ink drawing, a sketch, with the head of Saint Leonard, in the Uffizi (p. 48). That the *Resurrection* of the Berlin Museum had its origin in Leonardo's studio, that its author laid certain studies of the master under contribution for it, no one can doubt ; but to accept it as a picture painted by his own hand is to maintain a conclusion against which the great majority of connoisseurs from one end of Europe to the other have protested.



SKETCH OF BARONCELLI.
(Bonnat Collection, Paris.)

[1] The choice of these two saints has been regarded as an allusion to the Christian name of the painter, and that of his father's mother, the aged Lucia.

[2] *Jahrbuch der Kg. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, 1884—*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1889, vol. i. p. 501—505.

This first series of pictures should be completed, according to some German critics, by the engaging portrait of a woman in the Liechtenstein Gallery in Vienna, formerly attributed to Boltraffio.[1] The widely opened eyes, the slender nose, the rather prim mouth, the short chin and flattened jaw certainly recall the type of the Virgin in the *Annunciation* in the Uffizi. But this is important only if the *Annunciation* really is by the hand of the master—"quod est demonstrandum."

If the authenticity of the pictures we have just passed in review arouses many a doubt, "a fortiori" it would be impossible to fix their chronology. Any attempt in that direction would be premature and hazardous.

But though we may seek in vain for guiding data in Leonardo's youthful pictures, we are on firmer ground if we turn our attention to his drawings.

As basis of our operations we should take, as I have already pointed out, the *Landscape* dated 1473; the three *Dancing Girls* of the Accademia in Venice, which were most certainly executed in the studio of Verrocchio, and perhaps the study for the head of a youth in the Weimar Gallery, a study in which I am inclined to see the portrait of the model who sat to Verrocchio for his *David* (p. 33).

To judge by a certain heaviness in the manipulation of the pen, we may add to these first efforts a drawing in the Windsor Library, essentially rough in execution. It contains several combinations for a *Saint George* striking at the dragon either with a lance or with a club: also sketches of horses turning or lying upon the ground with exaggerated flexibility, as if they had no backbone (the horse in the left-hand corner suggests the horse of the Colleone statue). There is a curious shapelessness in the hoofs of these animals, a strange stiffness in their clumsy necks.

The pendant to this drawing contains a series of studies for cats and leopards; a cat watching a mouse, a cat putting up its back, a sleeping cat, a cat washing itself, a leopard crouching before

[1] This opinion was brought forward for the first time by Dr. Bode: *Italienische Bildhauer*, p. 156.—According to Müller-Walde (*Leonardo da Vinci*, p. 66) the Vienna portrait dates from about 1472.

it springs. Among these studies from nature, in which the cat shows its affinity to the tiger, there is a fantastic dragon, such as the imaginative artists of the Middle Ages carved on the gargoyles of cathedrals.[1]

To the years 1472–1473 a biographer assigns a series of drawings —studies of heads in the Borghese Gallery at Rome, the Uffizi Gallery, and the collection at Christ Church, Oxford,—which exhibit a type already very marked, very personal, midway between those of Ghirlandajo and Botticelli, by which I mean that it has all the firmness of the former combined with the distinction of the latter.[2] Though making my own reservations as to the dates assigned to these drawings, I note, more especially in the two first, scarcely perceptible traces of archaism : for instance, the rather low square chin. The artist has not yet mastered the gamut of expression ; the note of sentiment is as yet unfamiliar to him.

It is well known that Leonardo took great pleasure in designing fantastic helmets ; we may note especially that in the superb drawing of the *Warrior* in the Malcolm collection. Her Müller-Walde, one of the latest of the master's biographers, has, however, been surely somewhat hasty in connecting these sketches with the order for the helmet of honour presented to the Duke of Urbino by the Florentine Republic after the taking of Volterra (1472)! Now, Herr Müller-Walde knows as well as I do that this helmet was made by Antonio del Pollajuolo ; consequently, my honourable opponent has been forced to fall back upon the hypothesis of a competition in which Leonardo is supposed to have taken part. Here again, I can only say, that this is an ingenious conjecture without any solid foundation. Indeed, everything justifies the belief that this broad, ample drawing (p. 57), dates from a much later period in the artist's life.

At this time too, according to Herr Müller-Walde, Leonardo had begun to work for the Medici. Certain studies of costume in the Royal Library at Windsor[3] are supposed by him to be connected with

[1] A draped figure, standing, seen from behind (Windsor Library ; Richter, vol. i. pl. xxviii, no. 7, p. 391), recalls the traditions of the Quattrocento, the types of Perugino and Pinturicchio. It has none of the freedom and ease proper to Leonardo.

[2] Müller-Walde, *Leonardo da Vinci*, fig. 7.

[3] *Leonardo da Vinci*, fig. 36, 37, 38. Cf. p. 74.

the tournament of 1475, of which Giuliano de' Medici was the hero. The youthful female figure in a cuirass is, he says, no other than La bella Simonetta, as is proved by her perfect resemblance (!) to Botticelli's Simonetta in the Berlin Museum. But I must confess that I have not been able to find the most distant analogy between the features of these personages and those in Leonardo's sketch, which, from their technique, I should judge to be of much later date.

On the other hand, a sketch in the Windsor Library of a young man in profile, wearing a sort of cap, the upper part of which falls over the back of his neck,[1] is not unlike the bust of Lorenzo the Magnificent, formerly in Florence, and now in the Berlin Museum.

Finally, the young woman with the outstretched left hand of one of the Windsor drawings is, according to Herr Müller-Walde,[2] no other than Dante's Beatrice, and of the same period as Botticelli's compositions. The hypothesis has, in itself, nothing very improbable about it, but, if I am not mistaken, this again is a much later work.

Concurrently with painting, if we may believe Vasari, our sole guide for this period of the master's life, Leonardo worked at sculpture. At the same time he was studying architecture, sketching out plans of buildings, more picturesque than practical, and lastly, applying himself with ardour to the problem for which he had a passion all his life, the movement of water. It was at this time that he drew up a project for the canalisation of the Arno between Florence and Pisa.

In his first efforts as a sculptor, the biographer tells us, Leonardo executed busts of smiling women and children, worthy of a finished artist. A bust dating from this period, a *Christ*, was later in the possession of the Milanese painter-author, Lomazzo, who describes it as marked by a child-like simplicity and candour, combined with an expression of wisdom, intelligence, and majesty truly divine. No trace of these early efforts has come down to us.

But at least we know the models which inspired the young da Vinci; these were, after the productions of Verrocchio, the polychrome terra-cottas of the della Robbia. In the *Trattato della Pittura* (chap. xxxvii) he makes special mention of them—he who so seldom mentions

[1] Müller-Walde, *Leonardo da Vinci*, fig. 13. [2] *Ibid.* p. 75.

IV

Study for a Head of the Virgin, ascribed to Leonardo.



a name—though only in reference to their technique. His letter to the commissaries of Piacenza Cathedral is more explicit; in it he cites with justifiable pride the works in bronze which adorn his native Florence, and notably the gates of the Baptistery,[1] the masterpiece of Ghiberti. Vasari further tells us that he professed great admiration for Donatello.



PORTRAIT OF A WARRIOR.
(Malcolm Collection, British Museum.)

An admirable terra-cotta in South Kensington Museum, formerly in the Gigli-Campana collection, a young *Saint John the Baptist*, half length, with thick hair, bare neck and arms, and a strip of sheep's skin across the breast, displays the Leonardesque type in every point. If it cannot with certainty be attributed to the youthful master, it may at least show us what the style of his first Florentine sculptures probably was.

After 1478, we feel we are at last on firm ground. A drawing in the Uffizi, to which M. Charles Ravaisson first called attention, furnishes us with some particularly valuable indications bearing upon Leonardo's work after he left Verrocchio. This drawing, inscribed with the date in question, shows us that by this time the young master had already addressed himself to the study of those character-heads, beautiful or the reverse, which were destined to occupy so large a place in his work. He has sketched the portrait of a man about sixty, with a hooked nose, a bold and prominent chin, a very forcibly

[1] Richter, vol. ii. p. 401.

modelled throat ; the expression is energetic, and the whole composition as free as it is assured. All trace of archaism has disappeared ; the flexibility of the treatment is extraordinary ; the supreme difficulties in the interpretation of the human countenance are triumphantly surmounted. The sketch of 1478, somewhat softened, becomes the marvellous study in red chalk, also in the Uffizi (No. 150 of Braun's photographs). Opposite to this head, which attracts all eyes, there is a head of a young man, very lightly sketched, with those flowing, languorous lines which are the very essence of Leonardo's art. Beside this are sketches of mill-wheels, and something like an embryo turbine —the complete Leonardo already revealed. "On the 1478, I began the two Virgins," is written above the drawing. We do not know which these two Madonnas were, and their identity opens up a wide field for conjectures.

By this time, Leonardo's fellow-citizens and even the government had begun to take note of his fame. On January 1, 1478, the Signory of Florence commissioned him, in the place of Piero del Pollajuolo, to paint an altar-piece for the chapel of S. Bernard in the Palazzo Vecchio. The fate of this work was, alas, that of so many others. Having thrown himself with ardour into the task (on March 16 of the same year he received 25 florins on account) the artist tired of it, and the Signory was obliged, on May 20, 1483, to apply, first to Domenico Ghirlandajo, and subsequently to Filippino Lippi, who carried out the commission in 1484.[1] His picture, however, was placed, not in the chapel of S. Bernard, but in the Hall of Lilies in the Palazzo Vecchio. Herr Müller-Walde identifies the picture left unfinished by Leonardo with the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi, in which other critics, the present writer among them, see the cartoon designed for the convent of San Donato at Scopeto (see next chapter). The *Cicerone* believes it to have been the *S. Jerome* in the Vatican.

In 1479 Leonardo appears to have received an order, less important certainly, but more likely to appeal to an imagination which took such delight in the grotesque. After the conspiracy of the Pazzi, the

[1] "Comincio a dipingere una tavola nel detto Palazo, la quale dipoi in sul suo disegno fu finita per Filippo di Fra Filippo." (Anonymous biography, published by Milanesi, p. 11.)—Müller-Walde, *Jahrbuch der kg. Preuss Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, p. 126.

Florentine government resolved to have the portraits of the rebels painted on the walls of the Palazzo Vecchio, that their ignominious effigies might serve as a warning to future conspirators. They addressed themselves, as was customary, to the best known painters —Giottino, Andrea del Castagno, and many others had not hesitated to accept similar missions. The gentle Botticelli undertook one part of the work, Leonardo the other. Such at least would seem to be the case, judging from a curious drawing in the collection of M. Léon Bonnat, in which Leonardo has represented one of the conspirators, Bernardo di Bandini Baroncelli, who, having taken refuge in Constantinople, was delivered up by the Sultan—anxious by this act of extradition to show his good will towards the Medici—and hanged at Florence, December 29, 1479. The care with which the artist has noted every detail of the criminal's costume, even down to the colour of each article of raiment, authorises us in assuming that this sketch was to serve as the groundwork of a portrait which should take its place beside that executed by Botticelli. Here then we have the seraphic painter suddenly transformed into the depicter of criminals, almost, as it were, the assistant of the executioner! Leonardo, I dare swear, accepted the *rôle* without repugnance. For him, science ever went hand in hand with art. The study of the patient's last moments, the observation of the spasms of the death agony, interested him quite as keenly from the physiological as from the pictorial point of view. At Milan, later on, he frequently attended executions, not from morbid curiosity, but from the desire, so legitimate in the thinker and philosopher, to contemplate the supreme struggle between life and death, to seize the precise moment at which the last breath of vitality escapes, at which the gulf opens, whose depths no human eye has fathomed. This tension of every faculty of observation in the artist is eloquently expressed in the drawing in the Bonnat collection. There

[1] Poliziano describes the character of this personage in these forcible terms: "Uomo scelerato, audace, e che non conosceva paura, in quale avendo ancora esso mandato male cio che legli aveva, era involto in ogni sorte di sceleratezza . . . il Bandino fu il primo che gli passò (Giuliano) el petto con un pugnale.

"Bandini, non si contentando di avere con i suoi amazzato Giuliano, se n'ando alla volta di Lorenzo, il quale di già a punto s'era salvato con pochi in sacrestia, ma intanto il Bandini passò con la spada la vita a Francesco Nori, uomo accorto e che faceva per i Medici, e l'amazzò." (*La Congiura de' Pazzi*, ed. del Lungo, pp. 92, 95, 101.)

is no room here for emotion, for pity ; no attempt even at any *mise-en-scène:* a body in loosely hanging garments dangling at the end of a rope, the head bent forward, the hands bound upon the back—this is the whole composition. The dryness of the inscription which accompanies the drawing :—"tan-coloured breeches, black doublet, blue cloak lined with fox-skin, black shoes,"—accentuates the impassibility of this young man of twenty-seven in the presence of the most moving dramas.

Baroncelli was hanged December 29, 1479. Leonardo was therefore in Florence at this period.[1]

In spite of many uncertainties, we are perfectly justified, if only from the evidences contained in Leonardo's early productions, in affirming that from his very childhood he possessed an extraordinary power of assimilation ; that his mind took hold upon exterior forms, and made them his own with a facility that amounted to the marvellous. How different to Raphael, who was indebted in turn to the Umbrians, the Florentines, and the antique, before he finally created a type and a style exclusively his own! Even Michelangelo, in spite of the originality and loftiness of his genius, more than once laid his predecessors under contributions, notably Jacopo della Quercia and Signorelli, not to mention the Greeks and Romans.

Predecessors and contemporaries were alike powerless over Leonardo. Indifferent to the motives created by others, he was indebted to no man but himself.

[1] Richter, vol. i. p. 346, *note.*

5

Head of a Young Woman.



Printed by Draeger, Paris.



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."
(Uffizi, Florence.)

CHAPTER III

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI—"THE S. JEROME"—DEPARTURE FROM FLORENCE —SUPPOSED JOURNEY TO THE EAST.



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."
(The Louvre.)

LEONARDO'S thirtieth birthday was approaching, and he was working on his own account.[1] His reputation was now so far established that in March, 1481, the monks of the rich monastery of San Donato at Scopeto, beyond the Porta Romana, commissioned him to paint the altar-piece for their high altar, "la pala per l'altare maggiore."[2]

[1] In August, 1481, he was settled in his own house, "casa sua propria," at Florence. Müller-Walde, *Jahrbuch der kg. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, p. 121.

[2] The time allowed him for the completion of the altar-piece was two, or two and a half years. He was to receive in payment the third of a little property in the Val d'Elsa, but the abbey reserved the right of redeeming this third within a term of two years, for 300 florins "di suggello." Finally, on this third, Leonardo undertook to furnish the sum necessary to secure a dowry of 150 florins on the Monte di Pietà of Florence for a young girl mentioned in the act. He was also bound to provide his own colours, gold, &c.

The monastery of San Donato, which contained pictures by Filippino Lippi, Botticelli,

The artist set to work at once, but yielding to a fatal tendency—he was all flame at the beginning, all ice at the end of a few weeks—he soon put the unfinished work aside.[1] The monks waited patiently for about fifteen years. At last, in despair, they addressed themselves to Filippino Lippi. In 1496 he, more expeditious than Leonardo, delivered the beautiful *Adoration of the Magi*, the brilliant and animated work that now hangs in the same room with Leonardo's unfinished cartoon in the Uffizi. From the fact that the subject given to Filippino was the *Adoration of the Magi*, it was concluded that this was also the subject of the altar-piece begun by Leonardo; hence the identification of the cartoon with that in the Uffizi. True, the works of the two artists are almost of the same size, a fact that has escaped my predecessors. Signor Ferri, Keeper of the Prints and Drawings at the Uffizi, informs me that Leonardo's cartoon measures 2 metres 30 cm. by 2 m. 30 cm., and Filippino's picture 2 m. 53 cm. by 2 m. 43 cm. Both, in short, adopted a square, or almost a square shape, a very unusual one for such pictures.

But there are several objections to this argument. The interval between Leonardo's commission (1481) and Filippino's (about 1496) is so great that the friars may very well have changed their minds, and chosen a new subject. On the other hand, it is, of course, possible that Leonardo may have treated the same subject twice. But the next objection is a weightier one. In June, 1481, the picture ordered by the monks of San Donato was so far advanced that the brothers made a purchase of ultramarine, a precious substance used only on definitive paintings. Now the Uffizi cartoon is simply a sketch in bistre. A further objection is, that one of the studies for the *Adoration of the Magi* appears on the back of a sketch for Leonardo's masterpiece, the *Last Supper*. This juxtaposition is difficult to explain, if the cartoon

and other famous masters, was, like so many other monuments outlying the city, destroyed by the Florentines as a precautionary measure in view of the siege of 1529. (See Carocci, *Dintorni di Firenze*, p. 196. Florence, 1881.)

[1] The registers of the monastery for July, 1481, mention various small advances: first, twenty-eight florins to secure the dowry in question, then a florin and a half to buy colours. At an earlier date, June 25, the brothers had advanced four lire ten soldi, to buy an ounce of blue and an ounce of giallolino (pale yellow). They further sent Leonardo at Florence a load of faggots and a load of large logs, with one lira six soldi, for painting the clock, "per dipintura fece di uriolo."

was really painted in 1481, some ten years before the fresco. Finally, the style of the cartoon is akin, in parts, to that of Leonardo's works of 1500, rather than to that of youthful achievements, such as the *Virgin of the Rocks*. It has the supple modelling, the over-elastic attitudes, in which the bony substructure is apt to disappear altogether. We may add that the inclination the artist shows to represent horses in a great variety of attitudes points to the period of his studies for the *Battle of Anghiari* and the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, rather than his initial stages.[1]

If the date 1481 adopted by certain writers should be received with great reserve, that of 1478 put forward by others, who look upon the *Adoration of the Magi* as identical with a picture ordered in this year for one of the chapels of the Palazzo Vecchio,[2] must be uncompromisingly rejected. The chapel in question was dedicated to Saint Bernard, who figured in the altar-piece by Bernardo Daddi (1335), which Leonardo was invited to replace, and also in Filippino Lippi's work, which was finally substituted for that begun by Leonardo. How are we to reconcile the presence of Saint Bernard with an *Adoration of the Magi*?

I may add that Herr Müller-Walde believes the picture ordered by the monks of San Donato to have been a *Christ bearing the Cross*.[3] The German author considers a head of Christ in the Accademia at Venice a study for the picture in question. This study, on green paper (for which Leonardo had a predilection at the beginning of his career), has certainly strong affinities with Verrocchio's type of Christ. But the rest of the German critic's assumption is purely gratuitous.

[1] Vasari only says that Leonardo began a picture of the *Adoration of the Magi*, of great beauty, especially in the heads. "This picture," he says, "was in the house of Amerigo Benci, opposite the Loggia of the Peruzzi; like the master's other works, it was left unfinished." M. Strzygowski, unacquainted with the studies I had published eight years before in *L'Art* (April 15 and August 15, 1887), and in the *Revue des deux Mondes* (October 1, 1887), is of opinion that the Uffizi cartoon was begun after Leonardo's sojourn at Milan; that the drawing in the Galichon collection dates from 1480; the right-hand portion of the cartoon from 1494–1495; and the Madonna and the rest from the first years of the sixteenth century. (*Jahrbuch der kg. Kunstsammlungen*, 1895, pp. 159–175.)

[2] See p. 58.

[3] *Leonardo da Vinci*, p. 157.

Taking into account the methods dear to Leonardo, his intermittent ardour, his endless hesitations, it would be over-bold to attempt a solution of so delicate a problem of chronology, until a key has been furnished by documents in the archives. Let us be content, at present, to study the different phases through which the *Adoration of the Magi*



"THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI," BY FILIPPINO LIPPI.
(Uffizi, Florence.)

passed before taking form in the Uffizi cartoon. We can trace these step by step in a number of drawings.[1]

The earliest of the sketches preserved in the house—or perhaps I should rather say the museum—in the Rue Bassano, in which M. Léon Bonnat has collected so many mementoes of the great masters, shows

[1] The catalogue at the end of the volume describes those drawings not mentioned in the text.

that Leonardo's first intention was to paint, not an *Adoration of the Magi*, but an *Adoration of the Shepherds*, or *Nativity*, a subject we



STUDY FOR THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.
(The Louvre. Formerly in the Galichon Collection.)

know him to have painted for the Emperor Maximilian. It represents the Infant Jesus lying on the ground, with the Virgin adoring, and a child bending over Him. Nude figures are grouped to the right and

left, one of whom, with his bald head, his long beard, and the protuberant belly under his crossed arms, seems to have been inspired by the Silenus of the ancients. This strange personage re-appears (but in reverse) in a drawing formerly in the Armand collection, now in that of M. Valton. The drawing in the Bonnat collection also contains the figure of a young man, shading his eyes with his left hand. This motive recurs in a drawing in the Louvre, and in one in the Galichon collection, to which I shall return presently. In the latter, however, it is an old man, and not a youth, who thus concentrates his gaze on the Divine Child. A third spectator, the young man standing with one foot on the bench on which the oldest of the shepherds is seated, was transferred bodily from M. Bonnat's drawing to that of the Armand and Valton collections, save that in the latter he turns his back to the spectator, while in the former he is in profile.

Appropriate as all these attitudes are to the shepherds, they are entirely at variance with those traditionally given to the three kings ; we have none of those signs of profound veneration, the genuflections, the kissing of the feet, etc., which serve to characterise the monarchs from the far East.

Yet another figure in M. Bonnat's drawing, sketched on the same sheet, but apart from the main group, gives a final indication that we are studying a sketch for an *Adoration of the Shepherds*. It is a young man with clasped hands, naked but for a strip of drapery passing from his left shoulder to his right hip ; this is a shepherd, not an Eastern king, nor an Oriental attendant. The touching gesture of the clasped hands disappears in the sequel, and I cannot but regret it ; yet only strong and exuberant spirits, like Leonardo, can thus sacrifice their finest details, confident that they will be able to replace them by others no less perfect.

In the drawing which passed from M. Alfred Armand's collection to that of M. P. Valton, the composition has hardly as yet taken definite form in the master's mind. He still seeks and hesitates. Leonardo, indeed, had none of that precision of conception proper to the literary temperament. Not only did he give himself up to the most arduous toil in pursuit of his ideal, demolishing and reconstructing again and again, but he loved to hover tentatively round a subject,

instead of attacking it boldly. The drawing of the Valton collection betrays these fluctuations ; it contains only isolated figures, some of them so vaguely indicated that it is impossible to divine the master's intention through the maze of interwoven lines and corrections.

Among the recognisable figures I may mention the youth with his foot on a step, and the bearded old man, both borrowed from the drawing in the Bonnat collection. The old man's attitude is slightly modified ; his right hand supports his chin. The figure is repeated further off, leaning on a long staff. Then we have young men, their hands on their hips, a usual gesture among the actors or spectators in pictures of the adoration of the Magi ; it occurs, for instance, in Raphael's version of the theme in the Vatican. Other figures are remarkable for the striking originality of their attitudes ; they stand with arms crossed on their breasts, or hands on their hips, like the *Hermes* of Praxiteles, or the *Narcissus* in the Naples Museum. We know from the figure of Silenus mentioned above, that Leonardo now began to draw inspiration from classic models.

A drawing in the Louvre (in the revolving case at the entrance of the Salles Thiers), consists, like that of the Valton collection, of single figures only. But the composition has advanced a stage. Here, all the attitudes express the deepest reverence. First, we have a prostrate figure ; then two others bowing ; then a person advancing, his body slightly inclined, his hands uplifted as if to express astonishment. Finally, a spectator who shades his eyes with his hands to get a better view, and another, who stretches out his arm as if exclaiming : "Behold this miracle!"

A drawing in the Cologne Museum, to which Messrs. de Geymüller and Richter drew my attention, and for a photograph of which I am indebted to Herr Aldenhoven, is certainly contemporary with the Louvre drawing ; for both contain combinations of the same figures, with certain differences of attitude. In the Louvre drawing, the figures are partially draped ; whereas in the Cologne sketches, only three of the persons have indications of garments behind them.

But let us take the actors one by one. Beginning on the left, in the upper part, we have a charming figure of a young lad, his arms stretched

out before him, his head turned over his shoulder. Buskins are slightly indicated on his feet. In the Louvre drawing, this figure has undergone a complete transformation : instead of nearly facing us, as before, it is now seen almost from behind, clothed in a tunic fastened round the waist by a girdle.

The second and central figure is even more thoroughly metamorphosed. In the Cologne drawing, he faces us, one hand on his hip, the other over his forehead, shading his eyes. Both gestures are preserved in the Louvre drawing, but the figure is in profile ; and Leonardo has utilised another motive of the Cologne drawing for this last figure—that of the person in the middle distance, in profile, his hand above his eyes.



THE MADONNA OF "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."
(Fragment from the Cartoon.)

Another figure, a youth standing, towards the right, his shoulders drawn back, his fore-arms extended in an attitude expressive of surprise and veneration, has disappeared in the Louvre drawing, as has also one of his companions, standing, to the left, his arm resting on his hip. On the other hand, the bent figure advancing with arms extended, reappears in the Louvre drawing, draped, and with his arms drawn rather closer to his body. His neighbour, who bends forward with clasped hands, also figures in the Louvre drawing, where, however, he raises his head, instead of inclining it, and advances his right, instead of his left leg. He re-appears in the important drawing of the Galichon collection (see *L'Art*, 1887, vol. ii, p. 71), which represents the last stage of the composition. Another, who kneels on one knee, prostrates himself

on the ground in the Louvre drawing; but he has risen to his feet in that of the Galichon collection.

The group of five persons who press eagerly round the Divine Child is strikingly beautiful. But Leonardo suppressed it, as may be seen by a comparison of the Cologne and Galichon drawings. This group is marked by a fervour and enthusiasm, a passion and emotion, too rare in Leonardo's works. The master seems to have made it a rule to



CARTOON OF "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."
(Uffizi, Florence.)

repress his feelings, and to present a spectacle of perfect serenity to the world.

If the drawing in the Cologne Museum contained but this single revelation, if it had nothing of interest beyond this outburst of generous feeling, it would still be of the greatest interest to point it out to Leonardo's admirers, and I should feel myself sufficiently rewarded for my efforts by the pleasure of bringing it to light.

A fifth drawing, taking them in chronological order, is to be found in the Uffizi; it is a study for a background, which seems to have greatly interested the master. To the left are two parallel flights of steps; at the foot of one of these a camel is lying. There is nothing strange in this motive; the Adoration of the Magi was a theme which always gave the painter a certain licence in the multiplication of picturesque details, rare animals, exotic plants, etc. Take, for instance, Luini's fresco at Saronno, with the giraffe in the procession of the Magi. With what delight does the painter overstep the narrow boundary of sacred art, and emerge for a moment into the open air! But to return to the Uffizi drawing: on the steps of one of the staircases a man is seated; further on, a man ascends it, running. It struck me at first that Leonardo had thought of placing the Virgin at the head of this double staircase, and of showing the kings and their followers in the act of climbing the steps,—an arrangement which would have added wonderfully to the dramatic interest, and have given occasion for a grandiose *mise-en-scène.* But I will not venture to insist on this hypothesis. In the background of the sketch is a group of horses, kicking and rearing.

A drawing (p. 65), which passed into the Louvre from the Galichon collection, shows us the last stage upon which this laborious composition entered before it was committed to the cartoon. It has been wrongly described as Leonardo's first idea for the *Adoration of the Magi*; it would have been more correct to call it his last thought, seeing by how many others it was preceded. The beauty of the drawing, the eloquence and animation of the lightly sketched figures, many of them as yet undraped, the rhythm of the lines, which produces the effect of a musical vibration—Raphael was very evidently inspired by this method of drawing at the close of his Florentine and the beginning of his Roman period—and many other characteristic traits defy analysis. All is life, afflatus, love and light!

It is easier to define the analogies and the material differences between this drawing and its predecessors. Several of the figures of the earlier Louvre drawing have been retained, with modifications. The bowed naked figure with clasped hands is reversed, and has become the king who advances, bending forward, his hands outstretched.

The naked prostrate old man has served as model for the kneeling king. It may be noted that his figure has been gradually raised in passing from the Louvre drawing to the final cartoon. Other persons have not been utilised, as, for instance, the young man who shades his eyes with his hand; unless, indeed, he served as a study for the old man on the right in the Galichon drawing and the Uffizi cartoon. As to the young man standing, with extended hands, in the Louvre drawing, he, perhaps, was the original of the standing figure with uplifted hands on the right.

Let us now take the cartoon. The figures seem to emerge from a kind of mist; the most striking feature of the composition is the profound veneration expressed for the Divine Pair, the almost abject attitudes, the protesting hands. Leonardo did not propose to use grand and simple lines in this picture, as in the *Last Supper*, but rather to be lavish of picturesque groups; he treated the theme from the pictorial rather than from the decorative standpoint, introducing trees, which would have produced a magnificent effect; heads of horses full of character and animation; in the background, other horses, with mighty necks and chests, caracoling as in the *Battle of Anghiari*. The picture would have been lively, varied, and picturesque beyond any finished work by the master. A supreme distinction breathes from it, the charm of reverie; we note the master's pre-occupation with astonishing problems of chiaroscuro, of greater subtlety than those of Correggio. The sketch, in fact, is a grandiose creation, containing passages in a heroic style peculiar to Leonardo; the heroism here is more human, more picturesque, less abstract than that of Michelangelo.

The principal scene takes place in the open air, in a wide landscape, with lofty trees in the centre, and rocks in the background. The ox and the ass have disappeared. In the foreground, about the middle of the composition, the Virgin is seated; smiling, yet deeply moved, she presents her Son to the adoring kings. Her attitude has been slightly modified in the interval between the execution of the Galichon drawing and that of the Uffizi cartoon. In the former, she was seen almost in profile, bending forward; she is now erect, and has more dignity in her bearing, greater liberty in her gaze. She is charming both in expression and attitude, her left foot drawn back over her right, a

motive which seems to have inspired Raphael in the *Madonna di Foligno*, where the same pose of foot and head is adopted. The Child has undergone modifications no less important. In the drawing, he was seated on his mother's knee, and turning his back to her, he bent forward to the king kneeling before him; in the cartoon, he rests comfortably upon her lap, reclining rather than sitting, his right hand gracefully raised, while with his left he touches the vase the donor offers him. The latter, who was naked in the Galichon drawing, is now draped in an ample cloak; instead of holding out the vase to the Child with both hands, he offers it with one, resting the other upon the ground. In short, there is not a figure in the group which does not testify to the enormous amount of work bestowed on the composition.



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.
(Malcolm Collection, British Museum.)

The spectators on either side call for our special attention. Some are full of majesty, others of eager animation. They are grouped with inimitable ease and liberty. By an artifice, the secrets of which have been known only to the greatest dramatists, Leonardo opposes the calm of the persons standing at the extremities, and enframing the composition, so to speak, to the emotional and passionate gestures of those who press towards the Virgin, or kneel before her.



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.
(The Louvre.)

Here, again, Raphael was inspired by Leonardo; he

borrowed several of the worshippers placed to the left in his *Dispute of the Sacrament*, one of the most animated and eloquent of his groups.



TYPES OF VIRGIN AND CHILD. SCHOOL OF LEONARDO.
(Bonnat Collection, Paris.)

This imitation is very evident in a drawing in the late Duc d'Aumale's collection.[1] Three of the figures on the left, the old man leaning

[1] See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Raphael*, vol. ii. p. 31–34.

forward, the young man in profile beside him, and the man with his back to the spectator in the foreground, are almost exactly reproduced ; as is also the person standing on the extreme left, wrapped in a cloak, his chin resting on his hand. The breadth and majesty of this last figure, indeed, inspired yet another artist, more powerful and original than Raphael, an artist who was always ready to cry out against plagiarism, though he himself did not fail to lay the works of his predecessors under contribution. I refer to Michelangelo. Compare the figure of God the Father in his *Creation of Eve* in the Sistine Chapel with this old man of Leonardo's. The analogy is striking.

In this *Adoration of the Magi*, which biographers have passed over almost in silence, we have, in fact, the germs of two masterpieces by Michelangelo and by Raphael.

It is only men of genius like Leonardo who can thus lavish, to some extent unconsciously, treasures which make the fortunes of others, great and small.

The background of the cartoon consists of classic ruins, with crumbling arches, beneath which are animated groups of men on foot and on horseback ; the double staircase is retained, and several figures are seated on the steps on one side.

Of all the episodes of the sacred story, the Adoration of the Magi is that which lends itself best to the introduction of the hippic element.[1] It must therefore have been specially attractive to Leonardo, at all times such an ardent lover of horses.

Without transgressing the rules of sacred imagery, he was able to indulge a taste on which, indeed, he had every reason to congratulate himself. He accordingly gives us some dozen horses in every variety of attitude : lying down, standing, resting, walking, rearing, galloping. In the background to the right we have a regular cavalry skirmish, a forecast of that in the *Battle of Anghiari* ; naked combatants struggling among the feet of the horses on the ground, a woman, also naked, flying in terror, etc.[2] The central action suffers a little from their

[1] We need only recall the superb cavalcade of Gentile da Fabriano's *Adoration of the Magi*, in the Accademia at Florence ; the chargers, fiery or placid, which abound in Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes in the Riccardi Palace, and in Fra Filippo's and Filippino Lippi's pictures in the Uffizi.

[2] A horse's head in the Windsor collection seems to bear some relation to the horse

vicinity ; but great men alone are privileged to digress in this fashion. The vegetation, always so carefully observed by Leonardo, has not been sacrificed. A magnificent palm rises in the middle distance, near the centre.

One other peculiarity should be noted. Leonardo, a painter exclusively, with a certain contempt for the decorative arts, has not given the costumes of his heroes the richness by which these are generally marked in the art of the Middle Ages and of the early Renaissance.

He has dressed his personages in tunics, togas, or mantles, recalling those of the ancients—one of his rare gleanings from the art of Greece and Rome—but draped with greater freedom. Again, the vessels containing the offerings of the monarchs have none of the magnificence invariably bestowed on them by the primitive painters, and so well adapted to relieve the lines of a composition. They are chalices of simple shape and small size, with covers terminating in knobs.

One of the most learned of our modern art-historians has given an excellent analysis of the technique of the cartoon :[1] "Leonardo," he says, "first made a very careful drawing with pen or brush on the prepared panel ; he put the whole into perspective, as the drawing in the Uffizi shows ; he then shaded with brown colour ; but as he made use of a kind of bitumen, it has lowered very much in tone, and, in his finished works, this bituminous colour has absorbed all the others, and blackened the shadows extravagantly." Vasari, too, described Leonardo's innovations in much the same tone : "He introduced a certain darkness into oil-painting, which the moderns have adopted to give greater vigour and relief to their figures. Anxious to relieve the objects he represented as much as possible, he strove to produce the most intense blacks by means of dark shadows, and thus to make the luminous parts of his pictures more brilliant ; the result being that he gradually suppressed the high lights, and that his pictures have the effect of night-pieces."[2]

Unconsciously or deliberately, Leonardo shows predilections no less

standing to the left in the *Adoration of the Magi*, as does another horse's head, with indications of measurements, in MS. A of the Bibliothèque de l'Institut.

[1] Passavant *apud* Rigollot, *Catalogue de l'Œuvre de Leonard de Vinci*, p. 314.

[2] For the progress brought about by Leonardo in the art of modelling, see Brücke and Helmholtz's *Principes Scientifiques des Beaux Arts*, p. 110—111. Paris, 1878 (tr. from the German).

pronounced with regard to colour harmonies. For the more or less crude harmonies of his predecessors, he substituted a subtle scale, made up of subdued tints, such as bistre and bitumen; in these matters he was more ingenious than Rembrandt himself. Here the theorist confirmed the tendencies of the practitioner. We must read chap. lxxiv. of the *Trattato della Pittura* to see with what irony he rallies the mediocre painters who hide their incompetence under a blaze of gold and of ultramarine.



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI" (FRAGMENT).
(The Valton Collection.)

In another innovation, he meets Masaccio on common ground, if, indeed, his practice was not a reminiscence of the earlier master. Suppressing all idle accessories, he gives the place of honour to the human figure, stripped of vain ornament, and reduced to the simplicity of antique costume. This was, indeed, the principle of classic art itself, but his was a classicism invariably warmed and animated by the study of nature.

Let us now examine his conception of a picture. Leonardo's predecessors had all sacrificed more or less to literary painting—I mean painting in which ideas, motives, and composition come before a preoccupation with the problems of technique. They were born narrators; narrators now emotional, now amusing, apt in the illustration of some abstract idea by means of a figure or a gesture, skilful commentators, adding expression to the episodes of the Scriptures or the legends of the Saints by a thousand ingenious touches. How far removed were such achievements from Leonardo's ambitions! No artist was ever less disposed to submit to the bondage of literature. He wished his pictures to command admiration for themselves, not for the subjects with which they dealt; his triumphs lay in the solution of some problem of perspective, of illumination, of grouping, above all of modelling. For the rest, he trusted to his own poetical and emotional instincts.

If we consider the invention shown in his figures, we shall find that here, too, Leonardo proclaims the rights of the great historical painter. After Fra Angelico, concurrently with Perugino, and before Michelangelo, he banished portraits of friends or patrons from his sacred pictures. Not that he did not often seek inspiration in real persons, but he subjected them to an elaborate process of modification and assimilation before giving them a place in the sanctuary of art. See, for instance, his *Last Supper*. In short, he never introduced a portrait in any of his compositions; his characters are either purely imaginary, or highly idealised.



These various analyses will make it easy for us to characterise the progress realised, or I should perhaps rather say, the revolution accomplished, by Leonardo in painting. Studying nature with passion, and all the sciences that tend to its more perfect reproduction—anatomy, perspective, physiognomy—and consulting classic models while preserving all the independence proper to his character, he could not fail to combine precision with liberty, and truth with beauty. It is in this final emancipation, this perfect mastery of modelling, of illumination, and of expression, this breadth and freedom, that the master's *raison d'être* and glory consist. Others may have struck out new paths also; but none travelled further or mounted higher than he.

The best informed and the most enthusiastic of his biographers, the excellent Vasari, has well defined what was in some sort a providential mission. After enumerating all the artistic leaders of the fifteenth century, he adds: "The works of Leonardo da Vinci demonstrated the errors of these artists most completely. He inaugurated the third, or modern manner. Besides the boldness and brilliance of his drawing, the perfection with which he reproduced the most subtle minutiæ of nature, he seemed to give actual breath and movement to

his figures, thanks to the excellency of his theory, the superiority of his composition, the precision of his proportions, the beauty of his design, and his exquisite grace; the wealth of his resources was only equalled by the depth of his art ("abbondantissimo di copie, profondissimo di arte"). It would be difficult to say more happily that the supreme evolution of painting is due to Leonardo.

We shall perhaps better appreciate the immeasurable superiority of the *Adoration of the Magi* if we compare it with certain Florentine works of the same century.

We may take, for instance, Domenico Ghirlandajo's *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi, painted in 1487. Note the timidity of the action, and the stiffness of the horses in the background. As compared with Leonardo's manner, Ghirlandajo's is dry and crude, especially in his frescoes of the *History of Santa Fina*. Leonardo, thanks to the laws of chiaroscuro, which he strove to bring to perfection all his life long, was able to give his modelling a relief unknown to his predecessors, and to blend his colours with a suavity and *morbidezza* undreamt of heretofore, especially by Ghirlandajo.

If we turn to Filippino Lippi, we find the living antithesis of Leonardo. The one is brilliant indeed, but superficial; more inclined to literary painting than to the subtleties of design or colour; the other full of earnestness and conviction, gifted in the highest degree with the sense of form and of beauty.

Chance brought Leonardo and Filippino into contact on three several occasions. On the first, as we have seen, Filippino was charged (1483) with the execution of the altar-piece which had been ordered from Leonardo for the Chapel of S. Bernard in the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence. He had to fulfil the same mission again in 1496, and supply the *Adoration of the Magi* for the monastery of San Donato. On the third occasion, it was Leonardo, on the other hand, who begged Filippino to transfer to him a commission for an altar-piece for the Servites. Filippino, courteous and obliging, readily acceded to his request. But Leonardo, as usual, left the work unfinished, and in 1503 Filippino resumed his former contract, which death alone prevented him from carrying out.

The *Adoration of the Magi* as rendered respectively by Filippino and by Leonardo, illustrates the difference between the two masters to perfection. In Filippino's, in spite of passages of great beauty, such as the figure of the crouching shepherd, which is not unworthy of the brush of Raphael, we are conscious of the lack of expression in the heads ; all, but especially those in the foreground, are empty, trivial, and marked by a facile cleverness. Filippino did not fail to introduce portraits of his contemporaries, notably the Medici, an expedient to which Leonardo never lent himself.

On the other hand, Filippino could not wholly resist the fascination of his rival. The figure in profile with uplifted hands, behind the crouching shepherd, was evidently inspired by the personage in the middle distance on the right in Leonardo's cartoon.

The drawing of *S. Jerome* at Windsor and the sketch of *S. Jerome* on panel in the Vatican Gallery (formerly in the Fesch collection) are generally classed among the productions of the Florentine period.[1] The saint is represented on his knees, holding a crucifix in one hand, and about to strike himself on the breast with the other. The drawing is as firm and vigorous in execution as the sketch is blurred and hesitating. The vicissitudes through which the latter passed in its humiliation explain its imperfections all too well. The head was cut out from the panel, and was long separated from the composition. The features have an expression of deep suffering. The traditional lion at the Saint's side is superbly modelled. There is a church in the background, in which we recognise Santa Maria Novella at Florence, with the façade as restored by L. B. Alberti.[2]

The first thing that strikes us in considering this period of Leonardo's activity (from 1472, when he was received a member of the Guild of Painters at Florence, to 1482 or 1483, the date of his departure for Milan) is the extreme rarity of his works. Some two or three pictures and sketches are all we can point to as the fruits of these

[1] About 1478, according to Herr Müller-Walde. (*Jahrbuch der kg. Kunstsammlungen*, 1891, p. 126.)

[2] De Geymüller *apud* Richter, vol. ii. p. 54.

twelve years. And yet, vast cycles were projected and begun at this period in Florence and in Rome. How was it that the patrons of the day neglected the glorious *débutant*? The reason is not far to seek. By this time Leonardo's tendencies were familiar to all. It was known, on the one hand, that he had little taste for large compositions with numerous figures, such as frescoes; and, on the other, that his strivings after a perfection almost superhuman often led to the abandonment of a work he had undertaken.



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."
(The Louvre.)

Whatever the date, whatever the authenticity even, of the works we have now enumerated, the *Annunciations* in the Louvre and the Uffizi, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *S. Jerome*, etc., one fact is undeniable. Thenceforth a new leaven, fecund but disturbing, was at work; and this Leonardo alone had cast into the ferment of Florentine culture. Thenceforth the reign of archaism was over; its conventions and its rigidity were swept away, together with harsh contrasts of colour, the substitution of portraits for types, all, in fact, that implied effort and tension.

Let us pause for a moment over this last defect, and leave the others for later consideration. Can anything equal the easy grace of Leonardo, the apparent carelessness which overlies his profound calculation? His grounds, as we say now, were as conscientiously laid as those of any of his predecessors or contemporaries; but by

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Study for the "Saint Jerome."

(WINDSOR LIBRARY)



Printed by Draeger Paris.

dint of superhuman labour he contrived to conceal all traces of preparation; by prodigies of genius he gave to the whole the appearance of a work created by a single effort, and produced as it were by magic.

To a nature so essentially aristocratic as that of Leonardo, the horizon of Florence may well have seemed somewhat limited. The artist was probably ill at ease in a society which was radically middle-class; for popular prejudice against the nobility, and all that recalled the bygone tyranny, had lost nothing of its intensity; the Medici of the fifteenth century, Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo the Magnificent, had constantly to reckon with it, in spite of their omnipotence. And, munificent as these wealthy bankers and merchants were, they could not dispense honours, places, and treasure like the sovereign princes. In a community in which an irritable spirit of equality still reigned, the artist had perforce to live modestly and plainly. This was bondage for a spirit so brilliant and exuberant as Leonardo! The luxury of a Court, magnificent *fêtes* to organise, grandiose experiments to institute, a brilliant destiny to conquer—all these were attractions that were inevitably to draw him, sooner or later, to those elegant, refined and corrupt despots to whom most of the states of Italy were subject at the time.



S. JEROME IN THE DESERT.
(Vatican Gallery.)

But other causes were at work. Leonardo, we must remember, had no family. His father's successive marriages, the birth of numerous brothers and sisters, had finally driven him from the house he had for a time looked upon as his own. Among his fellow-citizens, he must have suffered from the blemish on his name. He may have had to endure ironical smiles, to hear himself branded by *sobriquets* more or less offensive. Among strangers, his illegitimacy could not be made a perpetual reproach to him, for the best of reasons—it would be unknown.

I am inclined to think that much which was bizarre in Leonardo's conduct, his extravagance, his occasional horse-play, proceeded from his desire to place himself beyond and above the conventions of his surroundings—conventions which forced him constantly to expiate a fault not his own. Far from submitting to this humiliation, and suffering in silence, he defied public opinion, and, as he could not be the most highly esteemed, he determined to prove himself the most gifted and the most brilliant.

We now approach a problem which has greatly exercised the world of art historians during the last few years. Did Leonardo go straight from Florence to Milan, or, yielding to the inspiration of his unstable humour, did he set out on travels more or less prolonged before pitching his tent in the rich plain of Lombardy? A few years ago, Dr. Richter hazarded a conjecture at once bold and ingenious. Struck by the numerous passages in which the master alludes to Oriental things, he concluded that Leonardo had visited the East, that he had served the Sultan of Egypt, and even that he had embraced Islamism.[1]

As far as the journey itself is concerned, there is a certain probability in the hypothesis, at least at the first blush. Many

[1] *Zeitschrift für bild. Kunst*, 1881. *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. ii. p. 385–392. *La Chronique des Arts*, 1881, p. 87–88. Cf. Charles Ravaisson-Mollien, *Les Écrits de Léonard de Vinci*, Paris, 1881. Uzielli, *Ricerche*, 2nd edit. vol. i. p. 72 *et seq.* Govi, *Alcuni Frammenti.* Douglas, *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society*, June, 1884. De Geymüller, *Les derniers Travaux sur Léonard de Vinci. Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1886. Enlart, *Les Monuments gothiques de Chypre*, 1898.

Italian artists, architects, painters, sculptors, and founders sought their fortunes at the Court of the Sultan, the Czar, or the ruler of Egypt: Michelozzo went to Cyprus, Aristotele di Fioravante settled at Moscow, Gentile Bellini spent a year at Constantinople, to say nothing of the innumerable Tuscan and Lombard masters established at Pesth, Cracow, Warsaw, and even in Asia!

The arguments put forward by Dr. Richter rest on more than one striking particular. In a manuscript by Leonardo in the British Museum there is an allusion to the eruptions of Etna and Stromboli; in the library at Windsor, a description of the Island of Cyprus; one of the manuscripts belonging to the Institut de France contains a plan of a bridge, inscribed, "Ponte da Pera a Gostantinopoli;" finally, in a sort of parable on the prohibition of wine, Leonardo shows his familiarity with a characteristic trait of Mussulman manners. There is yet another presumption, which seems still more conclusive: the famous *Codex Atlanticus* of Milan contains the copy of a letter addressed to the "Diodario di Sorio," the Diodaris of Syria, giving an account of works executed for the Sultan of Babylon, *i.e.* the Sultan of Cairo, by the writer: "I am now in Armenia, to devote myself to the works you charged me with when you sent me hither," wrote Leonardo. "In order to begin in the districts which seem to me best suited to our purpose, I have come to the town of Chalendra. It is a city close to our frontier, situated on the coast, at the foot of Mount Taurus, etc." Another letter begins thus: "I do not deserve the accusation of idleness, O Diodario, which your reproaches seem to imply. But the rather, as your benevolence, which caused you to create the post you gave me, is boundless, I have felt myself bound to make many researches, and thoroughly to inquire into the causes of effects so vast and stupendous; and this business has taken me a long time, etc."

From the report drawn up by Leonardo it would seem that the artist had been sent from Egypt to Asia Minor as engineer of the Sultan Kaït-Bai. According to some Arabian documents, extracts from which have been furnished by M. Schefer, this sovereign travelled through the Euphrates and Tigris valleys in 1477 to inspect the fortresses which were destined to fall into the hands of the Turks

about forty years later. In 1483 there was a terrible earthquake in Syria, especially at Aleppo; and to this Leonardo's words "grande e stupendo effetto," seem to allude. In his report Leonardo speaks at some length of the ruin of the town, and the despair of the inhabitants. His descriptions are illustrated by drawings representing rocks, the Arab names of which are given in Italian characters, and by a little map of Armenia.

In confirmation of these letters, the erasures and certain peculiarities of expression in which seem to show them to be actual compositions of Leonardo's, and not merely copies of documents by others, Dr. Richter points out that there are drawings of Mount Taurus by Leonardo, and that we further find notes and sketches relating to the East among his works. We may add that, according to Dr. Richter, this journey to the East took place either between 1473 and 1477 or between 1481 and 1485, periods during which we have no information whatever as to the master's life.

Plausible as Dr. Richter's hypothesis is, and strongly as it has been supported by some learned authorities, I think we must accept it with great reserve. Leonardo, whose imagination was always at work, may have gleaned information about the East from a variety of sources. An indefatigable compiler (some third of his manuscripts consists of extracts from ancient or modern authors), he may have transcribed documents composed by others, without taking the trouble to inform the reader (who was indeed, himself only, for he does not seem to have wished his writings to be printed), that he was not giving his own testimony, but quoting that of others. He may have drawn his particulars from a young man of the Gondi family, who was at Constantinople in 1480, from a member, that is to say, of the Florentine family who sub-let a house to Leonardo's father; or, again, from a friend in Milan, who had come in contact with the Sultan of Egypt's ambassador when he passed through the Lombard capital in 1476. We know the names of a whole series of Milanese who visited the Holy Land: Giovanni Giacomo Trivulzio, for instance, went to Syria in 1476[1]; Benedetto Dei, who was appointed director

[1] *Archivio storico Lombardo*, 1886, p. 866 *et seq.*

of the Portinari's bank at Milan in 1480, had also been in the East.[1]

M. Eugène Piot's opinion, as quoted by M. de Geymüller, is to the effect that the letters addressed to the Diodario might be explained in another fashion. It was not unusual in Leonardo's time to discuss contemporary matters in an allegorical form, as did the author of the *Letters of Phalaris* and the *Letters of the Grand Turk*. Gilberto Govi, who was deeply versed in Leonardo's writings, did not hesitate to put forward an analogous theory in a communication made to the Academy of Science in 1881: "The notes on Mount Taurus, Armenia, and Asia Minor," wrote the lamented professor, "were borrowed from some contemporary geographer or traveller. The imperfect index attached to these fragments leads us to suppose that Leonardo intended to use them for a book, which he never finished. In any case, these fragments cannot be accepted as proofs of his having travelled in the East, or of his supposed conversion to Islamism. Leonardo was passionately fond of geography; geographical allusions, itineraries, descriptions of places, outline maps and topographical sketches are of frequent occurrence in his writings. It is not surprising, therefore, that he, a skilled writer, should have projected a sort of romance in the form of letters, the scene of which was to be Asia Minor, a region concerning which contemporary works, and perhaps the descriptions of some travelled friend, had supplied him with elements more or less fantastic."

Abandoning this theory of a sojourn in the East, we have still to enquire into the circumstances which led to Leonardo's establishment at the Court of the Sforzi, so famous for its splendour and its corruption. What was the date of this memorable migration, which resulted not only in the creation of the Milanese school, but in setting the seal of perfection on the master's own works? The author of the anonymous life of Leonardo published by Milanesi says that the artist was thirty years old when Lorenzo the Magnificent sent him, with Atalante Migliarotti, to present a lute to the Duke of Milan. According to Vasari, however, Leonardo took this journey on his own

[1] De Geymüller, *Les derniers Travaux sur Léonard de Vinci*, p. 51.

initiative. The two biographers are agreed as to the episode of the lute: "Leonardo," says one, "was to play the lute to this prince, a passionate lover of music. He arrived, carrying an instrument he had fashioned himself; it was made almost entirely of silver, and shaped like a horse's skull. The shape was strange and original, but it gave a more sonorous vibration to the sounds. Leonardo was the victor in this competition, which was open to a large number of musicians, and proved himself the most extraordinary *improvisatore* of his day. Lodovico, charmed by his facile and brilliant eloquence, loaded him with praises and caresses."[1]

As regards the intervention of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the version given by the anonymous biographer is in every respect probable. Lorenzo perpetually played the part of intermediary between artist and Mecænas. We find him undertaking missions of this nature for the King of Naples, the Dukes of Milan, the King of Hungary, and even for civic bodies. We know that it was not the only service of the kind he rendered Lodovico Sforza. A few years later he sent the Duke the famous Florentine architect Giuliano da San Gallo, who began the building of a palace for him.

But when we turn to the date of the journey we are confronted by all sorts of contradictions. Vasari gives 1493, Messrs. Morelli and Richter 1485, the majority of modern critics 1483. Herr Müller-Walde puts forward the end of 1481, or the beginning of 1482.[2]

Let us examine these various hypotheses. A writer of the sixteenth century, Sabba da Castiglione, says that Leonardo devoted sixteen years to the model for the equestrian statue of Lodovico Sforza, which he finally abandoned in 1499. Deducting sixteen from the last named date, we get the year 1483. On the other hand, documents in the archives of Milan show that Leonardo was established there in 1487, 1490, and 1492. The date 1493 advanced by Vasari must therefore

[1] A learned Milanese, Mazzenta, who owned some of Leonardo's manuscripts, relates that the artist played very skilfully on a great silver lyre of twenty-four strings, and adds that he was perhaps the maker of the "arcicembalo," which was formerly preserved with his drawings in the Via San Prospero (Piot, *Le Cabinet de l'Amateur*, 1861–1862, p. 62; Govi, *Il Buonarroti*, 1873). Libri further declares that Leonardo's design for the lute was among his papers, and also a design for a viol.

[2] *Jahrbuch der kg. Pr. Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, pp. 107, 120–121, 126.

be put aside unconditionally. But the brilliant Italian connoisseur Morelli, whose paradoxes made such a sensation in Germany some years ago, relies on the testimony of this same Vasari to show that Leonardo was still at Florence in 1484.

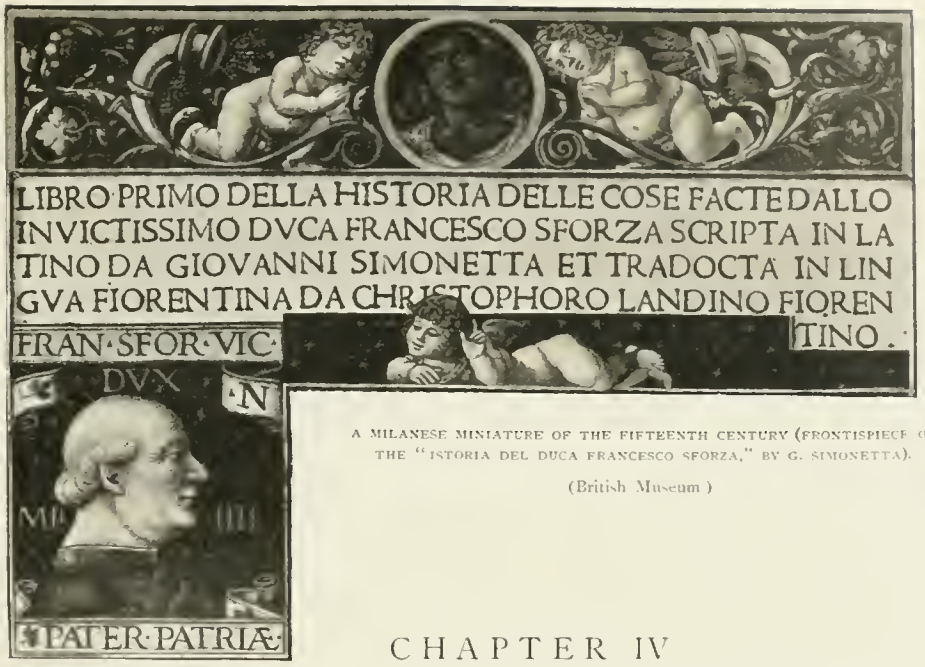
"After the departure of Verrocchio for Venice, that is to say in 1484," says the biographer, "Giovanni Francesco Rustici, who had known Leonardo in Verrocchio's studio, took up his abode with the young master, who had a great affection for him." But Rustici, who was born in 1474, was only ten years old at the date of Verrocchio's departure, and can hardly have studied under this master or under Leonardo. It was more probably after his return to his native city in 1504 that Leonardo gave advice and lessons to his young friend. It was then that he helped Rustici in the operation of casting his three statues for the Baptistery. This view of the matter is confirmed by Vasari's statement, that Rustici learnt more especially to model horses in relief and in *camaieu* from Leonardo. Now, Leonardo was much more occupied with studies of this kind in 1504, after his long labours on the statue of Sforza, and when he was working at the *Battle of Anghiari*, than in 1484. (It is interesting to note that in his memorial to Lodovico il Moro, Leonardo already proclaims himself capable of executing the equestrian statue of Francesco.) For these various reasons we must accept 1483 as the date of Leonardo's journey to Milan, until proof to the contrary is brought forward. This date agrees with the statement of the anonymous writer according to whom Leonardo (born in 1452) was thirty years old when he settled in Milan.

In spite of the mystery that rests on the first period of Leonardo's life, we are justified in saying that at an age when other artists are still in search of their true vocation, he had already grappled with the most diverse branches of human learning, and that in painting, he had developed a style so individual that posterity has agreed to call it by the name of its inventor. Instruction has but slight influence on natures so profoundly original as his; and on the whole Leonardo, like Michelangelo, can have received little from his master beyond some general indications, and the revelation of certain technical processes. If his early career nevertheless lacked the *éclat* that marked Michelangelo's

beginnings, it was the result of the fundamental difference of their genius. Leonardo, the dreamer, the enquirer, the experimentalist, pursued an infinity of problems, and was as deeply interested in processes as in results. Michelangelo, on the other hand, struck but a single blow at a time, but it was decisive; his thought was so clearly defined in his own brain from the first, that it was readily communicated to others. Violent and concrete works such as his make the deepest impression on the mass of mankind. Thus Buonarroti had all Florence for his worshippers from the first; whereas Leonardo, appreciated only by a few of the subtler spirits, had to seek his fortune elsewhere. It is not a matter for regret, as far as his own fame is concerned; but it has robbed Florence of one of her titles to glory.



HEAD OF CHRIST.
(Accademia, Venice.)



A MILANESE MINIATURE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY (FRONTISPIECE OF THE "ISTORIA DEL DUCA FRANCESCO SFORZA," BY G. SIMONETTA).

(British Museum)

CHAPTER IV

LODOVICO IL MORO AND BEATRICE D'ESTE—THE COURT OF THE SFORZI—PRINCES, HUMANISTS, AND SCHOLARS—THE MILANESE SCHOOL—LEONARDO'S PRECURSORS AND RIVALS.

Qui, come l'ape al mel, vienne ogni dotto,
Di virtuosi ha la sua corta piena;
Da Fiorenza un' Appelle ha qui condotto.
—BELLINCIONI, *Visione*.



Braun, Clément & Co.

STUDY OF A HORSE

(Windsor Library.)

LEONARDO'S sojourn in Milan coincides with Italy's last days of brightness, and with the dawn of a martyrdom which was to last three centuries and a half. The year 1490 is the fateful date which marks both the culminating points of a long series of successes, and what we should now call the beginning of the end. One alarming symptom, and one often observed at the outset of certain grave maladies, was the sense of security, of well-being, of almost sensuous pleasure, experienced by Italy at this psychological moment. "The year 1490, wherein our fair city (Florence), glorious in her riches, her

victories, her arts, and her monuments, enjoyed prosperity, health, and peace. . . ." So runs the inscription on Domenico Ghirlandajo's frescoes in Santa Maria Novella. Guicciardini, too, at the beginning of his *Istoria d'Italia*, fixes the apogee of his country's prosperity in the year 1490: "A sovereign peace and tranquillity reigned on every side," he says. "Cultivated in the most mountainous and sterile districts as well as in the fertile regions and the plains, Italy acknowledged no power but her own, and rich, not only in her population, her merchandise, and her treasure, but illustrious in the highest degree through the magnificence of many of her princes, the splendour of many famous cities, the majesty of the seat of religion, could point with pride to a host of men eminent in every science at the head of public adminstration, and to the noblest talents in every branch of art or industry; with all this she cherished her military glory, according to the custom of the times; and, endowed with so many qualities and so many gifts, she enjoyed the highest repute and renown among all other nations."

The Milanese chronicler, Corio, celebrates the blessings of peace in almost identical terms, and enumerates the titles of his masters, the Sforzi, to glory:

"The war between the Duke and the Venetians being at an end, it appeared to every one that peace was finally assured, and no one had a thought but for the accumulation of riches, an end which was held to justify every means. Free play was given to pomps and pleasures, and with the peace, Jupiter triumphed in such sort that all things appeared as stable and as solid as at the most favoured time in the past. The court of our princes was dazzling, splendid with new fashions, new costumes, and all delights. Nevertheless, at this period talent (the Italian author uses the untranslatable word "virtù,") shone with such brilliance, and so keen an emulation had arisen between Minerva and Venus, that each sought how best to ornament her school. That of Cupid was recruited from among our fairest youths; thither fathers sent their daughters, husbands their wives, brothers their sisters, and that without any scruple, so that many took part in the amorous dance, which passed for something truly marvellous. Minerva, on her side, did all in her power to grace her elegant academy. Indeed, Lodovico Sforza,

a glorious and illustrious prince, had taken into his service men of the highest eminence, summoning them from the remotest parts of Europe. Greek was known thoroughly at his court, verse and prose were equally brilliant, the Muses excelled in rhyme; there were to be found the masters of sculpture; thither came the finest painters from the most distant regions; songs and music of all sorts were so full of suavity and sweet accord, that it seemed as though they must have come down from heaven to this famous court. . . ."

But a nation cannot thus define and analyse its own greatness with impunity; from the day when, ceasing to question its own strength, it believes blindly in its star, it is bound to decline. Hapless Italy, and with her, Lodovico il Moro, Leonardo da Vinci, and even the worthy chronicler, Corio himself, were soon to learn this by sad experience.

Before studying the masterpieces created by Leonardo's genius in Milan, and his influence on the Milanese School, to which he gave a new inspiration and direction, just as Raphael did to the Roman School, we must glance at the Court of the Sforzi, his new patrons, and inquire what elements this *milieu*, at once youthful and suggestive, could add to the rich and varied treasure the new-comer brought with him from Florence.[1]

The duchy of Milan then, as now, the wealthiest of the provinces of Italy, was ruled by a dynasty of parvenus; mercenaries, *condottieri*, in the full force of the term. The founder of his house's fortune, Francesco Sforza, the son of a peasant turned general, had married the natural daughter of the last Visconti, and established his dominion over the whole of Milan, partly by force of arms, partly by diplomacy. Francesco was succeeded by his son, Galeazzo Maria, a monster of debauchery and cruelty, after whose assassination the ducal coronet fell to his infant son, the feeble and anæmic Gian Galeazzo. Profiting by the weakness of his nephew, Lodovico il Moro, Galeazzo Maria's brother, seized the reins of government, rather by subtlety than strength, and reigned in his nephew's name, till he finally rid himself of Gian Galeazzo by poison.

[1] The details I give here may be completed by those in my *Renaissance en Italie et en France au temps de Charles VIII.* (Paris, 1885, p. 209–273.)

Let us pause a moment before this figure, so justly celebrated, both for its crimes and its enlightened taste—before this tyrant, perfidious as he was cowardly, before this fastidious and impassioned amateur who, among the contemporary host of illustrious patrons of Art and Letters, had but one rival, Lorenzo de Medici, the personification of liberality and discrimination. Yet even Lorenzo the Magnificent could not boast of a Bramante or a Leonardo da Vinci among his servants.

Born at Vigevano on April 3, 1451, the fourth son of Francesco Sforza, Lodovico was early noted for his physical and mental qualities. The most careful of educations added lustre to his natural gifts; he rapidly familiarised himself with the humanities, learned to read and write fluently in Latin, and earned the admiration of his tutors by the tenacity of his memory, no less than by his facility of elocution.[1] In person he was a man of lofty stature, with very strongly marked features of an Oriental cast, a more than aquiline nose, a somewhat short chin, the whole countenance remarkable for its extraordinary mobility. The darkness of his complexion was particularly noticeable, and gained him his sobriquet of Il Moro, the Moor. Far from feeling ashamed of this peculiarity, Lodovico was proud of it, and in allusion thereto, he adopted as badge a mulberry-tree (in Italian, *Moro*).[2]

[1] "Fu oltra li altri fratelli dedito alli studii; el per il bono ingegno suo facilmente capiva il senso deli autori, di modo che, fra tutti li altri dominarno mai Milano, fu il più litterato" (Prato, *Archivio storico italiano*, vol. iii. p. 256–257). "Vir ore probo, moribus humanis, ingeniorum amantissimus, æqui servantissimus, nam et sæpe jus dicebat, lites longas et inextricabiles brevites cognoscendo. Postremo fortunam adversam habuit" (Raphael Maffei da Volterra, *Geographia*, Book iv.). See also Roscoe, *Vita e Pontificato di Leone X.*, ed. Bossi, vol. i. pp. 49, 141, 145, 146 (Milan, 1816).—Like all dogmatic spirits, Rio, the learned, impetuous, and eloquent author of *L'Art Chrétien*, is full of inconsistencies. If it had been in his power, he would have sent the whole line of the Medici and many others, to the stake of the Inquisition, but for Lodovico he is full of tenderness.

[2] "Fu questo signor Ludovico Sforza, da la negrezza del colore, cognominato Moro; cosi appellato primieramente dal patre Francesco e Bianca matre—ne li primi anni—" (Prato, *Archivio storico italiano*, first series, vol. iii. p. 256). "Ludovico, il quale fu di color bruno, et pero hebbe il sopranome di moro, et portava la zazzara lunga; si che quasi gli copriva le ciglia, si come dimostra il suo ritratto di mano del Vinci, nel refettorio delle Gratie di Milano, dove si vede anco il ritratto di Beatrice sua moglia, tutte due in ginocchioni con gli figli avanti, et un Christo in Croce dall' altra mano" (Lomazzo, *Trattato della Pittura*, ed. of 1584, p. 633). Portraits of Lodovico, sculptured, painted, drawn, engraved, are innumerable; besides the beautiful coin engraved by Caradosso, we

Lodovico had the blood of the Visconti in his veins. His mother, as we have said, was the daughter of the last representative of that famous house. From his grandfather, Filippo Maria, he inherited both cowardice and craft ; a short-sighted craft, however, that finally turned to his own disadvantage. Vacillating and uncertain, a man of schemes rather than of action, he was for ever laboriously spinning webs, through which the most blundering of bluebottles could pass with ease. His life was one long series of contradictions : he chose as father-in-law for his nephew, whom he intended to dethrone, so powerful a sovereign as the King of Naples ; he brought the French into Italy, and then moved heaven and earth to drive them out again ; he haughtily refused Louis XII.'s offer to leave the government of Milan to him during his lifetime on payment of a tribute to France, and immediately after, ignominiously abandoned his states. In short, he appears to have suffered from a kind of neurosis, which, at critical moments, resulted in utter feebleness and prostration ; he showed an inexhaustible activity in weaving plots, to which he was himself the first to fall a victim. Throughout his endless treacheries, however, one very modern trait is conspicuous, for which he deserves credit : he had an intense horror of bloodshed, a quality all the more praiseworthy in that the example of his brother, Galeazzo Maria, might well have accustomed him to strike by terror, instead of ruling by stratagem. Discovering a plot against his life, he was content, after executing the chief criminal, to condemn the other to life-long imprisonment, with the proviso that he should



Antiquarie ꝓſpectiche
Romane cõpoſte per
prolpectiuo Melanele
depictore

FRONTISPIECE OF THE 'ANTIQUARIE PROSPETTICHE.'

may mention the portrait in the Brera, attributed to Zenale, the statue on the tomb in the Certosa at Pavia, and a portrait in black chalk preserved in the collection at Christ Church, Oxford. (Rio, *L'Art Chrétien*, vol. iii. p. 67.)

receive two lashes yearly, on the feast of S. Ambrose. This was mildness indeed as compared with the horrible traditions of the Visconti!

Of restless temperament and insatiable ambition, Il Moro seized the first opportunity of wooing fortune: scarcely had his brother Galeazzo Maria fallen a prey to conspirators in 1476, when he began hatching plot after plot against his sister-in-law, the regent, Bona of Savoy. After several years of exile, he returned in triumph in 1479, seized the guardianship of his nephew, and, until the death of the latter in 1494, exercised despotic authority under the titles of Duke of Bari and regent of the Duchy of Milan.[1] But the regency was far from satisfying Lodovico's ambition; even the title of Duke of Milan could not assuage his greed: he dreamed of a kingdom of Insubria and Liguria, of which he was to be the sovereign.[2] The expedition of Charles VIII. in 1494—1495 interrupted the course of his prosperity for a while. But the storm passed over the Duchy of Milan and left no trace: the thunder-cloud was soon dispersed by the rays of that rising sun towards which all the rulers of Italy turned: Lodovico, the astute promoter of the campaign that ended in the battle of Fornovo; and now, more powerful, more glorious than ever, he found himself the arbiter of Italy.

Both by nature and by education, the prince had a passion for intellectual pleasures. But had this been otherwise, reasons of state would have made him simulate such a passion. The examples of the Medici had taught him that if he desired the suffrages of his citizens, he must appeal to their taste and their vanity. To epicureans such as the Italians—and they were epicureans in the higher sense—a liberality unaccompanied by the encouragement of letters, of science and art, would have failed altogether in its object. No political propaganda was so effectual as the erection of a sumptuous building, the ordering of a statue or a fresco signed by a famous name. The Mecænas of the period, Francesco Sforza for example, may not have believed blindly in the civilising mission of masterpieces; but the wily diploma-

[1] For Lodovico's history before his accession to power the reader is referred to a memoir published in the *Archivio storico lombardo*, 1886, p. 737.

[2] H. François Delaborde, *L'Expédition de Charles VIII. en Italie*, p. 217.

5

Study for the Virgin with the Infant Jesus (ascribed to Leonardo).

(BRITISH MUSEUM)



Printed by Draeger, Paris

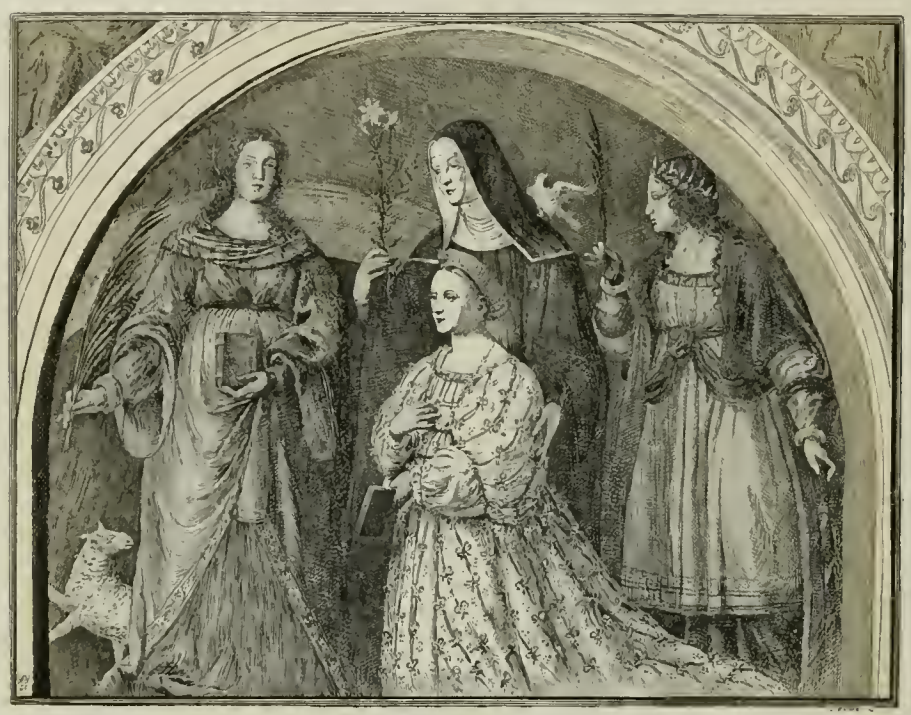
tists had faith—and a faith that was fully justified—in the effect produced upon the crowd by any act of enlightened magnificence. Lodovico, though his statesmanship was narrow, and although in a sense he took no thought for the morrow, never neglected this rule. He never relaxed his efforts to attract from far and near, any one who could add to his glory; writers who would sing his praises, artists who would multiply his portraits. Herein, and herein alone, his instincts served him well.

If he wanted a model by which to guide himself, Lodovico had but to turn to the most faithful ally of the house of Sforza, to that ardent and enlightened amateur, whose artistic insight was only equalled by his prodigious activity. After deriving inspiration from him in life, receiving from him counsel after counsel, artist after artist, Lodovico conceived the daring project of acquiring Lorenzo the Magnificent's marvellous collections after his death, more especially the intaglios and gems. A long correspondence with his favourite goldsmith, Caradosso, reveals the secret of his negotiations, which assumed all the importance of a diplomatic treaty. They failed, however, owing to the pretensions of the Florentine government, which impounded the Medici collections by virtue of a decree of confiscation.

Though Lodovico passed for a prince after the humanist's own heart, lettered, intellectual, liberal—one contemporary likens him to the magnet which attracts the iron from far and near, to the ocean absorbing the rivers; another affirms that it was his ambition to make of Milan another Athens—in everything connected with literature and science he lacked that unerring taste which the Florentines owed to a long and patient initiation, to centuries of culture. The Mecænas is evolved, not improvised. Lodovico might encourage poetry and rhetoric among his subjects, might summon the most famous writers of the day to his Court—there was no result. The Milanese continued to write the most uncouth, unpolished Italian, and even strangers such as Bernardo Bellincioni of Florence soon lost the native distinction of their language in their provincial surroundings.

The Milanese lacked intellectual depth. Neither the Visconti who, under Petrarch's auspices, had formed the admirable library of Pavia,

now one of the glories of the French Bibliothèque Nationale, nor the Sforzi, had shown that holy zeal in matters pertaining to letters which possessed the Medici. Lodovico il Moro, who understood the art of self-advertisement to perfection, disdained the obscure *rôle* of the bibliophile. M. Léopold Delisle found only one manuscript executed for Lodovico, a Sallust, among those in the Bibliothèque Nationale.[1]



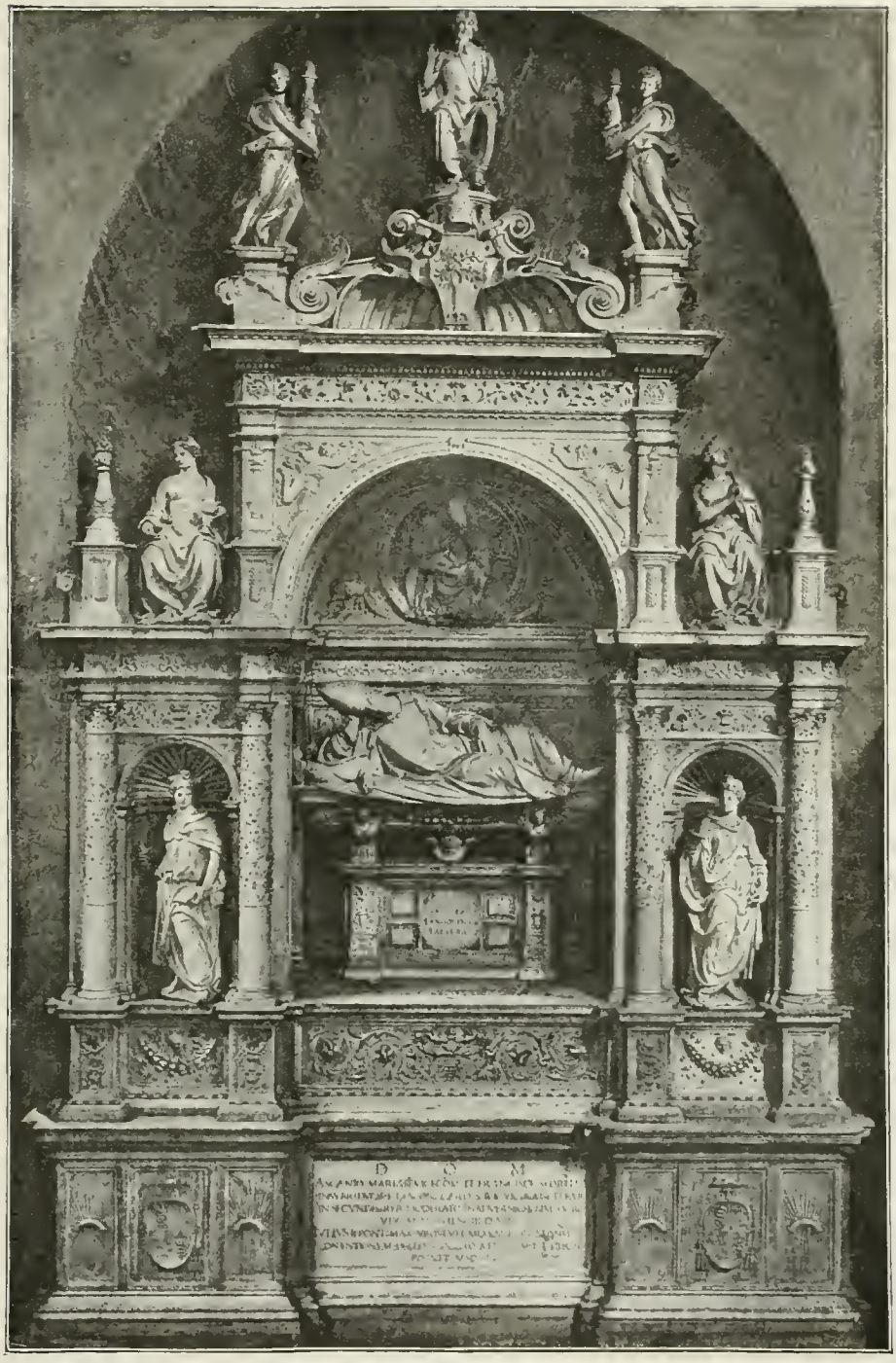
PORTRAIT OF IPPOLITA VISCONTI, BY BERNARDINO LUINI.

(Monastero Maggiore, Milan.)

On the other hand, was it a question of advertising himself in distant lands, Lodovico would put a whole army of ambassadors in motion, as in 1488, when he begged Mathias Corvinus, King of Hungary, to lend him a manuscript of Festus.

The pleiad of humanists—poets, orators, historians, philologists "e tutti quanti"—gathered around Lodovico was, in number at any rate,

[1] *Le Cabinet des Manuscrits.* See also the work of the Marchese d'Adda, *Indagini sulla Libreria del Castello di Pavia*, vol. i. p. 60 *et seq.*, 142 *et seq.*, 167; vol. ii. p. 85 *et seq.*, 101, 124. Also Mazzatinti, *Manoscritti italiani delle Biblioteche di Francia*, vol. i. c. xcvii–viii.



TOMB OF CARDINAL ASCANIO SFORZA, BY ANDREA SANSOVINO,

(Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome.

not inferior to that which filled the palaces and the villas of the Medici. But most of them were strangers to Lombardy. Francesco Philelfo, the famous professor of Greek, was born at Tolentino, Ermolao Barbaro at Venice, the Simonetti in Calabria, Jacopo Antiquario at Perugia, Bernardo Bellincione at Florence, Luca Pacioli at Borgo San Sepolcro; Constantino Lascaris and Demetrio Chalcondylas came from the heart of Greece. The poet Gasparo Visconti, the historians Calco and Corio, and the philologist, Giorgio Merula, alone were natives of Milan. The enumeration of these names in itself suffices to mark their relative obscurity. With the exception of Philelfo, who died at the beginning of Lodovico's regency, and of Ermolao Barbaro, who was only at his court as Venetian Ambassador (he composed a poem lauding Il Moro as champion on the occasion of the tournament of 1492), they are all laborious rather than brilliant spirits, chiefly philologists and chroniclers. What a crushing parallel for them was the Medicean coterie, with its Politian, its Cristoforo Landini, its Marsilio Ficino, its Pulci, its Pico della Mirandola, its Giovanni Lascaris, and a host of other shining lights! All the efforts of Il Moro, and even the encouragement he gave to the new-born industry of printing, were unavailing;[1] the Milanese were deficient in the necessary training and their duke in refinement of taste, as also in that loving zeal which contributed quite as much as their munificence to make the work of the Medici fruitful.

It may not be out of place here to acquaint ourselves with the chief of these literary and scientific men who, coming into perpetual contact with Leonardo da Vinci, formed an integral part of the circle in which he moved.

One of his friends, the poet, Gasparo Visconti, attached to the ducal court at an early age (1481)[2] was the author of a romance in

[1] The art of printing was carried on with great activity in Milan, and this naturally gave an impulse to letters. The first Greek book was printed at Milan in 1476. It was Constantino Lascaris' Greek Grammar.

[2] Document in the State archives of Milan, Pot. Sovrane A.—Z. Vitto. Visconti's poems have been printed in part by Argelati (*Bibliotheca Scriptorum mediolanensium*, vol. i. p. xlv.; vol. ii. p. 1386), who qualifies one of them as "rude." It is said that Visconti died in 1499 at the age of thirty-eight, but a text published by M. de Maulde (*Chronique de Jean d'Auton*, vol. ii. p. 331) speaks of him as having taken refuge in Mantua in 1503, and as included by Louis XII. in the list of the rebels.

verse entitled: *De Paulo e Daria Amanti* (1495). He begins it with an eulogy on Bramante, whom he knew to be in high favour at the court; he then breaks into a dithyramb in honour of Il Moro, no less exaggerated in form than vulgar in idea. He calls him

> Principe sagro, egregio tra li egregi
> Duca di duci e Re degli altri Regi.

Going on to speak of the building of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, he relates how Bramante discovered the tomb with the epitaph of Daria and Paulo and, beside the bodies, some books covered in lead and written in Lombard characters. Then follows, in the same insipid style, a list of the institutions of Bishop Azzo Visconti.

The verses of Bramante—for the future architect in chief of St. Peter's at Rome, the future "frate del Piombo," also tried his hand at poetry—[1] are, in general, no less rough and halting than those of his Milanese fellow-poets.[2] Among these Lombard poetasters, the prize for barbarism falls incontestably to the author—an anonymous writer, happily for his memory—of the *Antiquaria Prospettiche romane composte per Prospettico Melanese dipintore*, published between 1499 and 1500, and reprinted in Rome in 1876 at the instance of Gilberto Govi. This poem, which consists of an enumeration of the antiquities of the city of Rome, is dedicated to Leonardo, whose praises are sung in the two sonnets at the beginning.

Numberless other poems, more or less occasional, testify to the

[1] Some of Bramante's sonnets were published a century later in the *Raccolta milanese*, and then by Trucchi (*Poesie italiane inedite di dugento Autori*; Prato, 1847, vol. iii.). I have drawn attention to others in a MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale (*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1879, vol. ii. p. 514 *et seq.*). Signor Beltrami has given us these sonnets, twenty-three in number, in a collected edition: *Bramante poeta*, Milan, 1884.

[2] I will quote here from among his sonnets the one in which, long before Ronsard, he implored his fair "dolce nimica d'ogni riposo" not to let old age come upon her before responding to his flame:—

> "Dunque, mentre que dura il tempo verde,
> Non far come quel fior che'n su la pianta
> Senza frutto nessun sue frondi perde.
>
> Che quando il corpo in più vecchiezza viene,
> Più di sua gioventù si gloria e vanta,
> Vedendosi aver speso i giorni bene."

cordiality of Leonardo's relations with the Milanese versifiers. We shall return to the subject further on.

Leonardo may perhaps have also met the youthful Baldassare Castiglione (born in 1478), who was sent to Milan by his parents to finish his education.[1]

At that time, too, a Visconti, Ippolita, the wife of Alessandro Bentivoglio, afterwards known to fame as having commissioned Bernardino Luini to paint his masterpiece, the frescoes of the "Monastero maggiore," and also as the lady to whom Bandello dedicated his *Novelle*, assembled the most brilliant of these choice spirits in her palace. She was already an important figure in 1499, when Louis XII. confirmed her in several privileges.[2]



PORTRAIT OF THE POET BELLINCIONI, FROM AN ENGRAVING OF 1493.

Nor did Leonardo disdain, as we shall see later on, to take part in the poetic contests organised in Milan. Indeed, did he not excel as an improvisatore!

Besides her men of letters and her scholars, Milan contained a number of eccentric spirits, more or less given up to superstition. One can easily understand that the new-comer may have interested himself in more than one of these scientific charlatans, even though he gauged their powers, and despised them.

There was first of all his quasi-compatriot, Fra Luca di Pacioli, professor of mathematics, and a fervent follower of the doctrines of Pythagoras. We shall return later to this poor Franciscan monk, a writer no less laborious than unintelligible.

More mysterious, however, is his connection with a personage whom this same Pacioli lauds as profoundly versed in the science of Vitruvius, but who came to the most miserable end, a certain

[1] See my *Raphael*, published by Hachette, 2nd ed., p. 298.

[2] Pélissier, *Bulletin historique et philologique*, 1892, p. 139–140.

Jacopo Andrea da Ferrara.[1] What was Jacopo Andrea's speciality, what his philosophy? We know not. One of Leonardo's biographers suggests that he may be identified with the "Jacobus de Ferraria, ingignerius" who superintended the fortification of St. Angelo at Rome from 1485 to 1496.[2] But this is a mere conjecture. All we know for certain is that Jacopo, implicated in a conspiracy against Louis XII., was condemned to death with his accomplice, Niccolò della Busula, and that he was sent to the scaffold in 1500, though Archbishop Pallavicino had obtained his pardon. His body was quartered and the portions exposed upon the gates of Milan.[3]



THE CHRONICLER CORIO, FROM A CONTEMPORARY ENGRAVING

The sonnets, rhymed romances, and improvisations brought into vogue by Lodovico, were succeeded by theatrical representations. The prince seems to have

[1] "Jacomo Andrea da Ferrare, de l'opere de Victruvio acuratissimo sectatore, caro quanto fratello," to Leonardo da Vinci (*Pacioli*, ed. Winterberg, p. 33). Leonardo mentions Jacopo Andrea three times in the MSS. in the Institut: once in connection with a supper at which one of his pupils committed a theft; once as having lent a Vitruvius to one Messire V. Aliprando; and the third time merely by name.

[2] Uzielli, *Ricerche*, 2nd ed., vol. i. p. 382.

[3] A report upon the rebels, drawn up in 1503, states that "Jacques-Andrie de Ferraire was beheaded at Milan, and his goods given to Maistre Teodore Guayner, physician to the King." (*Chronique de Jean d'Auton*, edited by de Maulde, vol. ii. p. 335.)

acquired a taste for this kind of amusement at his wife's native Ferrara. In 1493, he opened a theatre, of which there is no other record than an epigram of Corti's.[1]

In dealing with philosophers, poets, historians, and men of learning in general, Lodovico—we cannot repeat this too often—hesitates and gropes. In dealing with artists, on the contrary, his judgment is absolutely unerring. Numberless documents prove with what solicitude and vigilance he directed the activity of the army of architects, sculptors, painters, goldsmiths, artists, and artificers of every description enrolled by him. He drew up the programme of their creations, superintended its execution, corrected, hastened, scolded them with a vivacity which bears witness both to an ardent love of glory, and to a most enlightened taste. This prince, so uncertain in his political opinions, gives proof in his many great artistic undertakings of admirable precision and judgment. Needless to remark, he was a declared champion of the classical style, and proved it on every occasion, now in the pursuit of antique statues, now in orders for goldsmith's work "al modo antico," now in erecting a triumphal arch "al rito romano,"[2] for the reception of the Emperor Maximilian. It was, too, as a representative of the best traditions of the antique that Lodovico insisted everywhere upon air, light, and open spaces at Milan, as well as at Pavia and Vigevano. His choice of the architects, whom he summoned from far and near, testifies to his sympathy for the innovators, who were breaking down the superannuated traditions of the Gothic style. From Florence, he brought Giuliano da San Gallo, founder of a dynasty of eminent architects; from Siena, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, celebrated both as architect and military engineer; from Mantua, Luca Fancelli, court architect and sculptor to the Gonzaghi. The single exception to this rule—the invitation addressed in 1483 to the master-builder of the cathedral of Strasburg, Johann Niesemberg, or Nexemperger, explains itself: the Gothic cathedral of Milan was to be furnished with a Gothic dome.[3]

The embellishment of his capital was Il Moro's first care, and here

[1] Tiraboschi, *Storia della Litteratura italiana*, ed. Milan, vol. vi. p. 1314.—Uzielli, *Ricerche*, 2nd edition, vol. i. p. 62.

[2] Corio, *Historia di Milano*, p. 962.

[3] *Revue alsacienne*, July, 1888.

he had much to contend with, for, then as now, Milan was no ideal city. In spite of the number and wealth of its inhabitants (in 1492 the number of houses was reckoned at 18,300, and the population—with an average of seven inhabitants to a house—at 128,100 souls [1]), some dozen other towns—Venice, Florence, Genoa, Siena, Rome, Naples—offered a far more picturesque aspect, more unity of decoration, a much more striking *ensemble*. The absence of a river, the unbroken flatness of the plain, the deterioration brought about by revolutions, and more than all perhaps, the foreign yoke that had weighed so long and so cruelly on the Lombard capital, were among the chief reasons of this inferiority. Subject in turn to the Spaniards, the Austrians, and the French, Milan could not develop normally as did Florence and Venice, for instance, where modern constructions blend so perfectly with memorials of the past.

The buildings erected by Lodovico are rather interesting than imposing or grandiose. It would seem as if the dawning Renaissance, fearful of being short-lived, had not ventured upon any but easy tasks, such as might be accomplished in a few years. We may instance the church of San Celso, the Baptistery of San Satiro, the Monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, built at the expense of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, the Hospital and, above all, the central part of Santa Maria delle Grazie with its matchless cupola.

"This glorious and magnanimous prince," says the contemporary chronicler, Cagnola of Lodovico, "adorned the castle on the 'Piazza Jovia' with marvellous and beautiful buildings, enlarged the square in front of the castle, had every obstacle removed from the streets of the city, and gave orders that the façades of the houses should be painted and ornamented. He did the same at Pavia. Vigevano he also enlarged, and enriched with many noble and handsome buildings; he caused a fine square to be constructed, and paved and embellished the whole district."

Born at Vigevano, in the fruitful plain intersected by innumerable water-courses, Lodovico showed a predilection for it as a residence all his life.[2] He summoned Leonardo to Vigevano, notably in February

[1] Cantù, *Histoire des Italiens*, vol. i. p. 157–158. [French translation.]

[2] On Vigevano, see Bellincioni, vol. i. pp. 35, 36, 150, 173, 194.—Decembrio, *apud* Muratori, *Scriptores*, vol. xx. col. 998; Cagnola, *Archivio storico italiano*, vol. iii. p. 188. Argelati, vol. i. p. ccclxxxi.—Burckhardt, *Geschichte der Renaissance*, 2nd ed., p. 7. De Geymüller, *Projets primitifs pour Saint Pierre de Rome*, p. 51 *et seq.*



BIANCA MARIA SFORZA
(From a drawing by G. M. Cavalli.)
(Accademia, Venice.)

1492. In 1495, Bramante repaired to the castle of Pavia, to seek the designs of the Clock Room "destined to serve as models for one of the rooms of the castle at Vigevano"; he also consulted a manuscript containing representations of the *Planets*, with which Lodovico proposed to decorate the ceiling of a room in the castle.[1] In the same year, Lodovico ordered a marble scutcheon from Gian Cristoforo Romano, for the church of the Misericordia at Vigevano (now destroyed.)[2] The reader may judge by a contemporary document, given in the accompanying note, of the multiplicity of undertakings which the duke carried out with a sort of feverish ardour.[3]



THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN.
(From a drawing by G. M. Cavalli.)
(Accademia, Venice.)

[1] Richter, vol. ii. p. 236. D'Adda, *Indagini*, vol. i. p. 156.

[2] *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1888, p. 57.

[3] June, 1497. Orders issued to Marchesino Stanga: First, to have a ducal scutcheon in marble placed above the Porta Lodovico, and ten bronze medals with the effigy of the Duke put behind the door (in the foundations?). Item, inquire if "Il Gobbo" (Cristoforo Solari) can execute this year, besides the sepulchre, a part of the altar, and whether all the marbles are ready; if not, send for them to Venice or Carrara. Item, urge Leonardo the Florentine to finish the work he has begun in the refectory delle Grazie, so that he may attend to the opposite wall of the refectory; make a contract with him, signed by his own hand, which shall engage him to finish whatever he undertakes to do in a given time. Item, urge on the completion of the portico of S. Ambrogio, for which 200 ducats have been allotted. Item, finish the half of the other portico, for which the Duke has alloted 300 ducats. Item, collect the most skilful architects to examine and make a model for the façade of S. Maria delle Grazie, having regard to the height to which the church must be reduced, in order to bring it into harmony with the great chapel. Item, the Duke has said he wishes to see the street from the courtyard. Item, have the head of the late Duchess done so that it may be placed upon a medal with that of the Duke. Item, have the door, which is called the Porta Beatrice, opposite to the church of San Marco, opened, and have a ducal scutcheon placed upon it like that upon the porta Lodovico, with an inscription relative to the Duchess. . . . Item, have the new "Broletto" finished for the calends of the month of August following. Item, tell them to gild (?) the letters graven on black marble ("le lettere adorate in marmo negro") for the portraits in the chapel. . . (Cantù, *Archivio storico lombardo*, 1874, p. 183–184.)

The pleasures attendant on luxury, the organisation of festivals of every description, tournaments, dances, plays, diversions more or less ingenious and intellectual, absorbed the Milanese Mæcenas almost, if not quite, as much as the cult of poetry or art. To hand down some great masterpiece to posterity was assuredly a most enviable mission, but, meanwhile, contemporaries must be beguiled, and it was not by transcendent works that one might hope to delight the masses in the fifteenth century, any more than in our own. To this end, the resources of the capital of the Duchy lent themselves admirably. Except Venice and Florence—republics, with no courts, properly speaking, democracies where strict regulations opposed a barrier to luxury—Milan was wealthier than any other city of Italy. Ostentation was almost a means of government. The pomp displayed by Galeazzo Maria Sforza on the occasion of his journey to Florence in 1471, still lived in every memory. Had it not dazzled even the Florentines, the most sceptical of people, a race not easily moved to enthusiasm? Lodovico, like his brother, Galeazzo Maria, was of opinion that magnificence was the inevitable corollary of power. Nothing was too beautiful or too rich for his personal adornment. The famous diamond of Charles the Bold,



BEATRICE D'ESTE. FROM THE MONUMENT BY CRISTOFORO SOLARI.
(Certosa, Pavia.)

the Sancy, blazed in his cap or on his doublet.[1] And if we turn to the "artes minores" what zeal, what liberality, what unfaltering discrimination he displayed. Miniature painting as represented by the famous Antonio da Monza owes to Lodovico many exquisite pages of the richest combinations, the rarest delicacy of colour, and the most ineffable charm: to mention but a few at random, there is his marvellous marriage contract, now in the British Museum, the frontispieces of the history of Francesco Sforza, the *Libro del Jesus* of the young Maximilian Sforza in the Trivulzi Library. Music was held no less in honour by him; I have told how Leonardo gained his good graces by his skilful playing on the lute.[2]

A series of ceremonies, partly private, partly public, gave Il Moro an opportunity of admitting even the humblest of his subjects to the enjoyment of all these marvels; the marriage festivals organised by him surpassed in brilliancy and refinement, as we shall see directly, anything that the Italy of the Renaissance had ever witnessed. Not one of these ceremonies, down to the smallest reception of an ambassador, but was a state affair, in the full force of the term, setting in motion all the resources of Lodovico's imagination, for he had no idea of leaving anything to the hazard of the moment. To give one example among many—in 1491, when about to receive the ambassadors of the King of France, he issued the following instructions, the precision of which could not well be improved upon by any master of the ceremonies or director of protocols. The chief ambassador is to be lodged in the "Sala delle Asse," occupied at present by the most illustrious Duchess of Bari; this apartment is to be left as it is, save for the addition of a bed-canopy ornamented with fleurs-de-lys. The adjoining apartments, hung with rich tapestry, are to serve respectively as robing and dining rooms. To the second ambassador, Lodovico gave up his own apartments, to the third, those occupied by Madonna

[1] Belgrano, *Della Vita privata dei Genovesi*, 2nd edit. p. 100. Lodovico went so far in his pursuit of the rare and curious as to obtain a dwarf from Chios. (*Archivio storico lombardo*, 1874, p. 485.)

In 1481 the number of courtiers, functionaries and servitors of all ranks, who had the right of eating in the ducal palace, amounted to 170. (State archives of Milan. Pot. Sovr. A.—Z. Vitto.) Curious details touching these personages are to be found in the *Chroniques* of Jean d'Auton, published by M. de Maulde (vol. ii. p. 328 *et seq.*).

[2] On music at Milan, see Tiraboschi, *Storia della Litteratura italiana*, ed. Milan, vol. vi. p. 633 *et seq.* On the festivals, see the *Archivio storico lombardo*, 1887, p. 820.

Beatrice, Jacopo Antiquario, and other personages. The Duke also enters into the most circumstantial details as to the arrangement of these rooms, mentioning the tapestry, the velvet hangings, and the furniture to be placed in them. The gentlemen of the suite he ordered to be lodged in the various hostelries of the city, the Well, the Star, the Bell.[1]

Lodovico sometimes chose Bramante,[2] sometimes Leonardo, as impresario for the more important of these festivals. In 1489, on the occasion of the marriage of Gian Galeazzo Sforza, the latter collaborated with the poet Bellincioni, in the construction of a theatrical machine, which they christened "Il Paradiso." It was a colossal orrery, in which the planets, represented by actors of flesh and blood, revolved round the princess by means of an ingenious mechanism, and sang her praises.[3]

In 1491, Leonardo arranged the jousts held in honour of Messire Galeazzo di San Severino, Lodovico's son-in-law. We know from his own account that on this occasion he introduced masquers representing savages.

It seems to me very probable that certain sketches of squires and pages, now in the Windsor Collection, are studies for the costumes Leonardo designed for these festivities. They are remarkable for their sovereign elegance and distinction. To Leonardo and his contemporaries, they were but improvisations for the uses of a day; but genius has given them a vitality that has preserved them for centuries, in all their freshness and poetry.[4]

In Leonardo's manuscripts there are a few rare passages relating to these masques and festivities. There is the sketch of a bird which is

[1] From a document in the State archives of Milan, communicated to me by the Vicomte Fr. Delaborde.

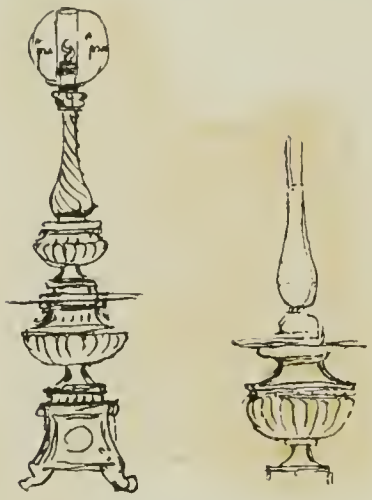
[2] De Geymüller, *Les Projets primitifs pour la Basilique de Saint Pierre de Rome*, p. 48.

[3] "Festa ossia rappresentazione chiamata Paradiso, che fece fare il Signore Ludovico in laude della duchessa di Milano, e così chiamasi, perchè vi era fabbricato con il grande ingegno ed arte di maestro Leonardo Vinci fiorentino il Paradiso, con tutti li sette pianeti che girovano, e li pianeti erano rappresentati da uomini nella forma ed abiti che si descrivono dai poeti, e tutti parlano in lode della prefata duchessa Isabella." (Bellincioni, *Le Rime*, vol. ii. p. 20 *et seq.*—Dulcinio, *Nuptiæ ill. ducis Mediolani quinti Joh. Galeaz Vicecomitis Sfortiæ*. Milan, 1489 (Argelati, vol. i. p. dlxxxv.)

[4] According to Herr Müller-Walde, on the other hand, these sketches relate to a tournament presided over by Giuliano de' Medici. But I have already shown the value of this conjecture (p. 56).

to figure in a comedy, a "design for a carnival costume," etc. He also proposes to have snow brought from the tops of mountains in summer and scattered in public places during festivities.[1]

The most gorgeous of these pageants was that held on the occasion of the marriage of Bianca Maria Sforza with the Emperor Maximilian (November 30, 1493). From one end of the city to the other, the streets were hung with tapestries, garlands, festoons, and scutcheons, on which the serpent of the Visconti and the cross of Savoy alternated with the imperial eagle. The model of the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, Leonardo's unfinished masterpiece, stood before the castle of the "Porta Giovia," under a triumphal arch. The chapel was ablaze with hangings "more beautiful than those of Barbary, of Flanders or of Turkey," with candelabra,[2] vases "al modo antico" executed after Lodovico's orders (note this term—"in the antique style") with jewels and ornaments of the rarest kind, treasures



DESIGN FOR CANDELABRA.
(*Codex Atlanticus.*)

[1] Richter, vol. i. p. 361. Directions for a handsome carnival costume may be found in Manuscript i. (fol. 49, v°) in the Institut.

[2] These candelabra recall those which Leonardo drew on one of the pages of the *Codex Atlanticus* (ed. Govi, pl. xvi). Two contemporaries, Pietro Lazzarone of the Valtellina and Baldassare Taccone of Alessandria, sing the splendours—the one in Latin, the other in Italian—of this alliance, the most illustrious ever contracted by a princess of Milan. Il Moro thought no sacrifice too great to secure the protection of the emperor: he gave his niece a marriage portion of 400,000 gold florins (equal to about £800,000), besides a trousseau valued at 100,000 florins, making up a total which represented nearly a year's revenue of the Duchy. (This revenue, according to Corio, amounted to 600,000 florins.) But, despite the power and wealth of the Sforzi, this union was far from being agreeable to the Germans with their strong prejudices as to birth. "The marriage," writes Commines, "has greatly displeased the princes of the Empire and many friends of the King of the Romans, not being contracted with so noble a house as befitted his Majesty: for, on the side of the Visconti, as they who reign in Milan call themselves, there is but little nobility"—(These were indeed purists, for whom the Visconti were not noble enough!—the Visconti, who for a century had counted among their kinsmen and allies the Kings of France, and most of the ruling families of Europe!)—"and still less on the side of the Sforzi, of whom the Duke Francisque de Millan was born." (Petri Lazarone, *Epithalamium in nuptiis Blancæ Mariæ Sfortiæ cum Maximiliano Romanorum Rege*, Milan, 1494. Argelati, vol. i. p. dxcvi. See also F. Calvi, *Bianca Maria Sforza Visconti*, Milan, 1888.)

that defy description by the pen of the poet or the brush of the painter.

A natural flexibility enabled Lodovico, the fastidious æsthete for whom nothing was too sumptuous, and who might have given points to any Byzantine Emperor, to transform himself into a simple country gentleman: every now and then he opposed the charms of nature pure and simple to the refinements of city life, and the subtleties of a finished and voluptuous civilisation; as a pendant to the splendid castle of Milan, he had the gardens, the pastures and farms of his castle at Vigevano. Does this not show that the existence of the Italian princes of the early Renaissance was wonderfully comprehensive, and that in Lodovico il Moro the man was as admirably balanced as the ruler was incomplete? But let us inquire more closely into those diversions, which alternated with his enjoyment of the delicate and subtle productions of Leonardo's brush. At Pavia, the pleasures of the chase prevailed; "The chasteau," says our worthy chronicler Robert Gaguin, "is a very beautiful place, and marvellously well plenished with all necessary things. And joining the castle is a great park, enclosed about like the forest of Vincennes. It is well furnished with wild beasts such as stags, hinds, and roe-deer, wild cattle, horses, and mares, goats and other animals. At the end of the park is a monastery of the order of the Carthusians [des Chatreux (*sic*)], in which is a beautiful church, made for the most part of marble, and the porch all of alabaster."



MARSHAL TRIVULZIO. FROM A PLAQUE ASCRIBED TO CARADOSSO.

At Vigevano and in its neighbourhood, Lodovico the huntsman became Lodovico the agriculturist. His estate, or model farm there —it is still Gaguin who speaks—was "a place much esteemed for the marvellous number of beasts that are there, and that all may see with the eye, as horses, mares, oxen, cows, bulls, rams, ewes, goats, and other beasts of the like nature with their young, as fawns, foals, calves, lambs, and kids. The domain is nobly situated in the midst of a great meadow about four leagues in circuit. And the meadow has more than thirty-three streams of fair living water running through this spot

so well suited for industry, seeing that they serve for the bathing and cleansing of the beasts, as well as for the watering of all the meadows. The plan of the said demesne is a square, like a great cloister, and around it, in the park, are stands loaded with hay, besides the other goods that are there. In the court of the said demesne are governors and captains, who direct all the interior. The out-buildings behind are in the shape of a great cross. In this place are many servitors, their wives and families. That is to say, some for grooming, tending, and cleaning the beasts; others for milking them; and also there are others to receive the milk and deliver it over to the master cheese-maker, who makes it into the great cheeses they call here Milan cheeses. Everything is taken and given by weight. That is to say, the hay, the milk, the butter, the cheese, and there is a great wealth and abundance of all things."

I must ask the reader's pardon for dwelling on details apparently so trivial. But they have their significance. In this careful measuring and weighing of milk, &c., we trace that love of precision that characterised the Renaissance, the tendency to examine and classify—in a word, the modern scientific spirit!

Lodovico married comparatively late in life. He was forty when he was united to Beatrice d'Este in 1491. This explains the important part played in his life by his various irregular connections. He showed a certain distinction of taste, moreover, in his choice of favourites.[1] It is not known who was the first of Lodovico's mistresses. It may have been that Lucia Visconti whom he made Contessa Melzi, and who bore him a son in 1476. I know not if she, too, was the mother of his daughter Bianca (married in 1489 to Galeazzo di San Severino, died 1497), and of Leone, the future Notary-Apostolic.

The second of Lodovico's favourites seems to have been Cecilia Gallerani. Of a noble Milanese family, she had received a brilliant education, and spoke and wrote Latin and Italian with equal facility. Her verses were much admired, as were also the solemn orations she recited at various times before theologians and

[1] I complete, by means of the *Famiglie celebri d'Italia* by Litta, and of the *Archivio storico lombardo* (1874, p. 486–487), the data furnished by Uzielli in his *Leonardo da Vinci e tre Gentildonne milanesi del secolo XV*, (Pignerol, 1890). See also *Les Amies de Ludovic le More*, by M. Pélissier, from the *Revue historique* of 1890.

philosophers. Her name and her praises are constantly to be met with in Bandello's *Novelle*. Many poets extolled her beauty and her talents.

According to M. Uzielli, Lodovico's *liaison* with Cecilia began in 1481 at latest, for at that time the favourite received from her lover an estate near Saronno. In 1491 Lodovico presented her with a vast and sumptuous palace, formerly belonging to the Count of Carmagnola, the restoration of which was directed by Giovanni de' Busti, the ducal engineer. The building is now the "Broletto," or Finance Office. In May of the same year, Cecilia bore a son, who received the name of Cesare, and who, on the occasion of the solemn entry into Milan of his natural brother Maximilian, in 1512, bore the ducal sword before him.

If Lodovico's marriage with Beatrice d'Este did not entirely break the bonds that united him to Cecilia, at least it imposed some restrictions on their intercourse. Beatrice, who at first showed a supreme indifference towards her husband, soon became jealous of the favourite. In February 1492, she declared that she would not wear a certain gown of gold tissue if her rival were permitted to wear the same.[1] Lodovico was at last forced to promise either to find a husband for his mistress, or put her into a convent. It was probably about this time that he married her to Count Lodovico Carminati Bergamino.[2]

One word more about this distinguished woman, to whom we shall refer again in connection with the portrait of her painted by Leonardo: Cecilia Gallerani died in 1536 at a very advanced age.

Details are lacking as to the character of Lucrezia Crivelli, who appears to have succeeded Cecilia Gallerani, and who also had the honour of being painted by Leonardo. In 1497, during the lifetime of Beatrice d'Este therefore, she received an important donation from her lover; her son, Giovanni Paolo, was made Marquis of Caravaggio by his father, and thus became the founder of the family of that name.

[1] It was perhaps on the occasion of one of these disputes that Lodovico, after barely a year of marriage, forgot himself so far as to strike his wife. (Bertolotti, *Il Filotecnico*, May–June, 1887.)

[2] This accommodating husband followed the fortunes of Il Moro, in spite of himself: put by Louis XII. upon the list of rebels, he fled to Mantua (1503), and his pension of 300 ducats was assigned to one of the Trivulzi. (*Chroniques de Jean d'Auton*, ed. de Maulde, vol. ii, p. 335.)

Adopting the profession of arms, he signalised himself by his valour, and died in 1535.

There is nothing to prove that these two favourites were ambitious of any higher glory than to sit to Leonardo. Nothing in them recalls the intriguing Isotta da Rimini, or suggests Diane de Poitiers, or Madame de Pompadour.

The support and collaboration which Lodovico neither asked nor expected from the nobles of his court, he found indeed, in the highest degree, in his consort, the ambitious and energetic Beatrice d'Este, daughter to Duke Ercole of Ferrara. This princess had been affianced to him as early as 1480, when she was only five years old, for she was born in 1475. The marriage was finally consummated on January 18, 1491, and during the six years that were to elapse before her death on January 2, 1497—she was barely twenty-two—few clouds seem to have dimmed their happiness. Notwithstanding her extreme youth, Beatrice at once gave a bolder turn to Lodovico's policy. To her counsels is attributed the ever-increasing rigour of the hapless Gian Galeazzo Sforza's imprisonment. Her feminine vanity did the rest. Neglecting no opportunity for the humiliation of her niece, Isabella of Aragon, the lawful Duchess of Milan, she ended by provoking a storm which very nearly cost her the throne. We know how Isabella's trials at last drove her father, the King of Naples, to threaten Lodovico, and how the latter, to save himself, induced Charles VIII. to make his descent upon Italy. This time, all turned out well for Beatrice and her husband; poison, it is affirmed, rid them of Gian Galeazzo, and their alliance with the other Italian States relieved them of the irksome ally they had called in, the feeble and pretentious Charles VIII. But let us leave political history and return to our own subject, the history of art and letters. There is no doubt that Beatrice, brought up in the traditions of the house of Ferrara, the dynasty of all others in Italy which best understood how to husband its resources, taught her lord to give more method to his enterprises, and to follow them up with greater spirit.



BRAMANTE (AFTER A MEDAL BY CARADOSSO).



"THE MARTYRDOM OF S. SEBASTIAN," BY VINCENZO FOPPA.

(The Brera, Milan.)

From time to time, in 1490, in 1510, &c., the visits of Beatrice's sister, Isabella of Mantua, incontestably the most fascinating woman of her day, infused more life and warmth into these cold calculations.[1] With her passion for the beautiful and her fine intellect, Isabella was not long in singling out Leonardo da Vinci, and it was not her fault that this king of artists did not come to Mantua, and there take the place of Andrea Mantegna, then at the end of his long and glorious career. The Marchesa at least succeeded, by dint of many entreaties, in obtaining a few of his works, among others, the portrait of herself, that superb cartoon, for the discovery of which in the Louvre we are indebted to M. Charles Yriarte.

A third representative of the house of Este, Cardinal Ippolito (born 1470, died 1520), the brother of Beatrice and Isabella, established himself in Milan in 1497, the year of Beatrice's death. He was one of those "grands seigneurs" on whom Fortune had lavished her favours from his birth. In 1487, when scarcely seventeen years of age, the patronage of his aunt, Beatrice of Aragon, the wife of Mathias Corvinus of Hungary, secured to him the rich archbishopric of Gran, or Strigonium, in Hungary. In 1497 he left this to ascend the archiepiscopal throne of S. Ambrogio at Milan. His taste for letters (it was for him that Ariosto wrote the *Orlando Furioso*) was hardly inferior to his military talents. (In 1500 he gained a brilliant victory over the Venetian fleet.) His love of art was no less pronounced. Like his sisters, he was ambitious of obtaining some work from Leonardo's hand. Unhappily, an outrageous violence of temper dimmed the lustre of his qualities. Having discovered that one of his natural brothers had supplanted him in the good graces of a lady of Lucrezia Borgia's suite, he had his rival's eyes put out. In one of the stanzas of the *Orlando Furioso* (canto xlvi., v. 94), Ariosto shows us the Cardinal sharing both good and evil fortune with his brother-in-law, Lodovico: now assisting him with advice, now unfurling at his side the serpent standard of the Visconti; following him in flight, and consoling him in

[1] See a study of the highest interest by Messrs. A. Luzio and R. Renier on the relations of Isabella d'Este with the Court of Milan: *Delle relazioni di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga con Ludovico e Beatrice Sforza*. Milan 1890.

affliction.[1] The fall of the house of Sforza did not interrupt the relations between Leonardo and the Cardinal. In 1507 we find the painter seeking the prelate's support in his lawsuit with his brothers.

Lodovico's brother, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza (born 1445, died 1505), may also be mentioned as a would-be Mæcenas. This personage, whose crafty face has come down to us on one of Caradosso's medals, was the most arrant intriguer of his time. A worthy brother of Il Moro, he long contested his policy, but ended by giving it the most devoted, if not the most loyal, support. At the moment of his flight, in 1499, Lodovico refused to confide the citadel of Milan to his keeping. For the rest, he was a man of intelligence and taste, and was capable, on occasion, of liberality. Poets, historians, painters, sculptors, musicians, sought his favour, when they could not obtain that of his all-powerful brother. To him the musician Florentius dedicated his *Liber Musices*, the chronicler Corio his interesting *Historia di Milano*, published at Venice in 1503. The sculptor Antonio Pollajuolo worked for him, as did also the medallist Caradosso; and at his request Bramante planned the cathedral of Pavia. After sharing the misfortunes of his brother, Ascanio died in Rome, where Andrea Sansovino's magnificent tomb in S. Maria del Popolo assured his immortality.[2]

Lodovico's niece, Bianca Maria Sforza (born in 1472; married 1493, to the Emperor Maximilian; died 1510), was, according to Lomazzo, soft as wax, tall and slender, with a beautiful face and graceful carriage. Unfortunately, it would appear that her intellectual and moral qualities did not correspond to her

[1] In questa parte il giovene si vede
Col Duca sfortunato degl' Insubri,
Ch' ora in pace a consiglio con lui siede
Or armato con lui spiega i colubri;
E sempre par d'una medesma fede,
Or ne' felici tempi o nei lugubri:
Nella fuga lo segue, lo conforta
Nell' afflizion, gli é nel periglio scorta.

[2] On the miniatures in the manuscript of Florentius dedicated to Cardinal Ascanio, see Vasari, ed. Milanesi, vol. iv, p. 28. The general's bâton belonging to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza is now in the collection of Prince Charles of Prussia; his armour is in the "Armeria" of Turin (Angelucci, *Catalogo della Armeria reale*. Turin 1890, p. 47–48).

promising exterior. Bianca Maria was, in fact, thoroughly empty-headed, and more occupied with the distractions of court life than with intellectual matters; her husband soon tired of her. Before her departure for Germany she does not seem to have distinguished herself by any evidences of artistic taste.[1]

The activity of Lodovico was too restless and too devouring to permit of any other Mæcenas at his side. Assuredly, neither his unfortunate nephew, Gian Galeazzo, feeble in mind as in body, nor Gian Galeazzo's wife, Isabella of Aragon (born 1470, married 1489) could dream of entering the lists against him from their gilded prison in Pavia.[2]

An exquisite medal by Caradosso, and medallions in marble in the Certosa at Pavia and the Lyons Museum have preserved the lineaments of the fragile Gian Galeazzo, and a medallion by Gian Cristoforo Romano, the moody countenance of Isabella of Aragon. This most unhappy princess left Milan in January, 1500, to return to her native country, where fresh trials awaited her. She died in 1524.[3]

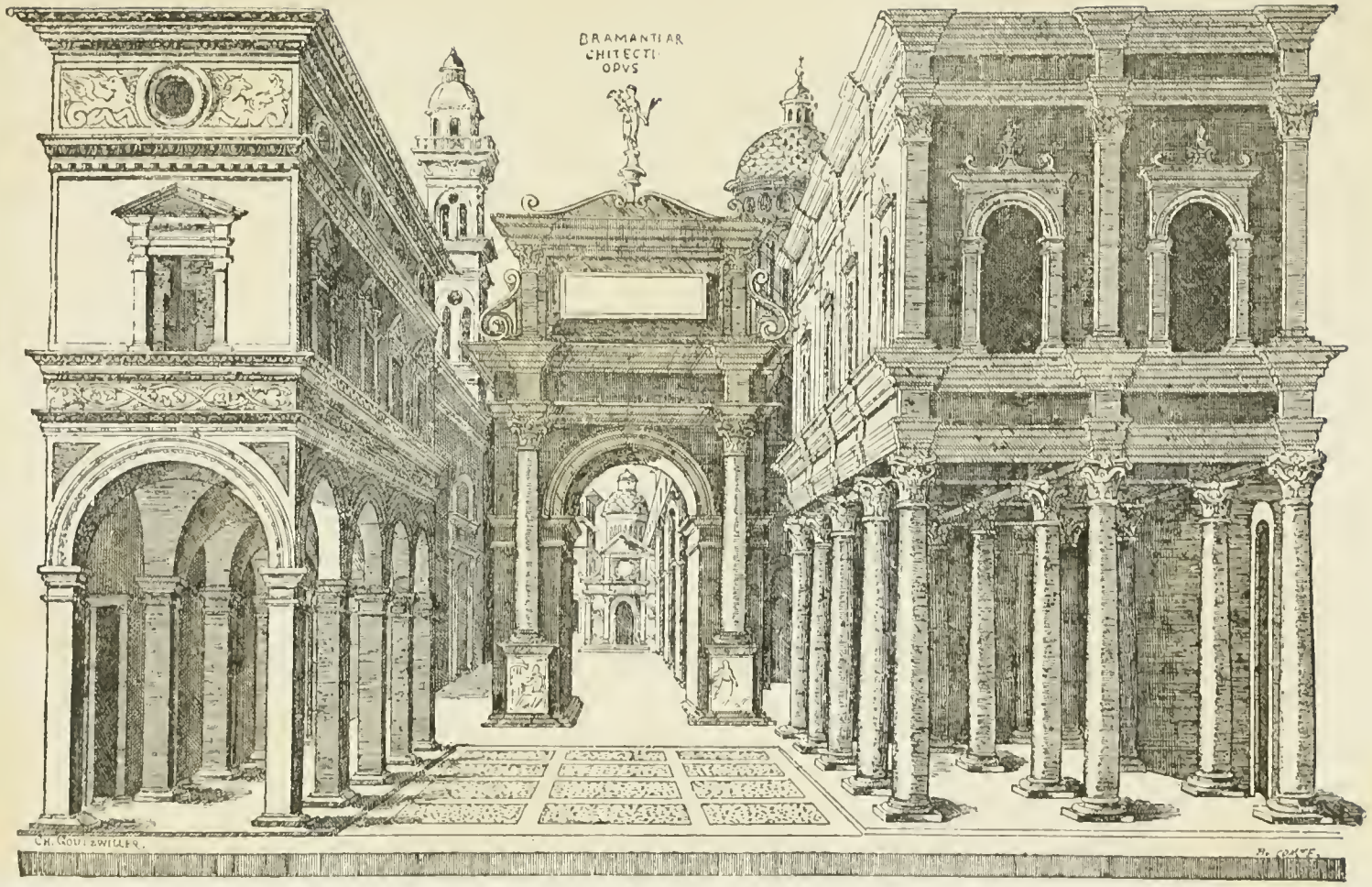
The ranks of the Milanese aristocracy included many brilliant members—the Borromei, the Belgiojosi, the Pallavicini—but their artistic activities were confined to the occasional building of a palace or a mausoleum, or to the ordering of some votive picture.

The San Severini were more intimately connected with the life of our hero. One of them, Galeazzo, had married a daughter of Il Moro in 1489. Four years previously his father had been declared a rebel by that very prince, and Galeazzo, in his turn, betrayed Lodo-

[1] The portrait of this princess has been bequeathed to us by Ambrogio de Predis (Visconti-Arconati Collection, Paris), and possibly also by Leonardo da Vinci (see Dr. Bode's article in the *Jahrbuch der kg. Pr. Kunstsammlungen*, 1889.)

[2] An unpublished document in the Archives of Milan proves, however, that Isabella was surrounded even in 1493 by a complete court. This document gives a list of the costumes made in 1493 for the ladies ("le zitelle") of the Duchess' suite. Here we learn that for Ippolita Stindarda a gown ("una camorra") of blue satin ("raxo") was ordered, for Cornelia Columba a straw-coloured satin, for Lucrezia Barilla one of white satin, for Laura Macedonia a satin gown "lionata chiaro," for Fiora di Spina one of "birettino" satin. Then come the gowns for four other ladies (making a total of thirteen gowns, with silk sleeves), and six gowns of cloth ("panno"), making a total of fifteen ladies in waiting. We must not lose sight of the fact that the government was carried on and justice administered in the name of Gian Galeazzo (*Pot. sovrane; Carteggio ducale; Mobili*).

[3] See Luzio and Renier, *Delle Relazioni*, p. 151.



A MILANESE PORTICO OF THE TIME OF LODOVICO IL MORO (AFTER AN ENGRAVING ASCRIBED TO BRAMANTE.)

vico to Louis XII. He maintained his relations with Leonardo, however, and in 1496 built himself a fine palace, "Roma Nuova," near Vigevano.[1]

The son of Cardinal d'Estouteville, Guglielmo Tuttavilla, Count of Sarno (died 1498), was distinguished for his taste and culture.[2] His name frequently recurs in the poems of Bramante and his circle.

Marshal Gian Giacomo Trivulzio (1447—1518) had both a passion for enterprises on a grand scale, and the means for putting his projects into execution;[3] but, being exiled from Milan during Lodovico's government, he was unable to give free course to his tastes till after his enemy had fallen. He commissioned Leonardo to make designs for his tomb, but we have no evidence to show that the project went any further than a few preparatory studies and sketches. (On the statuette of a horseman in the Thiers collection, see next chapter.) Leonardo, however, did paint his portrait, according to the already quoted testimony of Lomazzo.

One word, too, as to the Melzi. They were rather Leonardo's friends than his patrons. One of them, the youthful Francesco, placed himself under the tutelage of his distinguished companion, and followed him to Amboise, remaining with him till his death.

The atmosphere of Lodovico's brilliant and sceptical court must have been singularly congenial to a temperament like that of Leonardo.

In what light did the Mæcenas and the artist regard each other? How did these two emancipated spirits react on one another, and what effect did their reciprocal penetration exercise upon the art, the science, the philosophy, the many lofty and pregnant qualities embodied in Leonardo? Their minds were not without striking analogies. At once subtle and vacillating, Lodovico did his utmost to impose his own

[1] Paravicini, *L'Architecture de la Renaissance en Lombardie*, p. 4.—According to Müller-Walde (*Jahrbuch der kg. Pr. Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, pp. 109–110), the portrait in the Ambrosiana represents Galeazzo.

[2] See the *Raccolta Milanese* of 1756 (last page).—Burchard, *Diarium*, ed. Thuasne, vol. ii. p. 499.

[3] See Richter, vol. ii. pp. 6, 15, 17. Lomazzo has left us a very exact portrait of Trivulzio:—"Giacomo magno Triulzi Milanese fu piccolo di corpo, ma ben fatto; era di fronte spatiosa, di naso rilevato, con alquanto di zazzara, andava raso, come si vede in una medaglia di mano di Caradosso Foppa et in suo ritratto dipinto da Leonardo, et fu nell' armi di singolar valore." (*Trattato della Pittura*, p. 635.) See also Brantôme, *Œuvres*, ed. Lalanne, vol. ii. p. 221–226.

idiosyncrasy on his interpreters. Let us hear what Paolo Giovio, the priestly chronicler, says of him: "Lodovico had caused Italy to be represented in a hall of his palace as a queen, accompanied by a Moorish squire (in allusion to his complexion or his device), bearing a musket. He sought to show by this allegory that he was arbiter of the national destinies, and that it was his mission to defend his country against all attack." An illuminated copy of the *Istoria di Francesco Sforza*, by J. Simonetta (printed at Milan in 1490), bears upon its frontispiece a series of allegories or emblems scarcely less bizarre. In order to understand them we must remember that Lodovico always made art subservient to his political aims. In the foreground, on the shore of a lake, are Gian Galeazzo and Lodovico, both kneeling, each with his right hand lifted towards heaven, as if mutually exhorting one another; on the waters a woman stands on a dolphin, holding a sail, beside a barque with a negro (in allusion to Lodovico) at the helm, and a youth against the mast; in the air, S. Louis (Lodovico) appears to the two. In the vertical border is a mulberry tree, another allusion to the surname "Il Moro," with a trunk of human form, round which twines a branch, terminating in a human body and face. The inscription: "Dum vivis, tutus et lætus vivo, gaude fili, protector tuus ero semper," proclaims Il Moro's beneficent guardianship of his hapless nephew.[1]

Another enigmatic allegory on the bust of Beatrice d'Este, now in the Louvre—two hands hold a napkin, through which a fertilising dust falls on the calyx of a flower—has led one of the most learned warders of our national museum to ascribe the work to Leonardo, who alone at that time, it would seem, was acquainted with the mystery of flower fertilisation. Although we know now that this striking bust was the work of Gian Cristoforo Romano, one of the court sculptors of Milan, and that the emblem of fertilisation had already been adopted by Borso d'Este, the uncle of Beatrice, it is a fact that Lodovico affected such extravagant logogriphs, as if to challenge our powers of penetration.

Everything leads us to suppose that the Milanese prince exhibited this taste for subtlety in his attitude towards science also. If our

[1] This miniature is reproduced in M. F. Delaborde's *Expédition de Charles VIII. en Italie.*

premises are well-founded he should have encouraged astrology, [1] alchemy, chiromancy, in short, every science tinged with mystery, or laying claim to some special secret or discovery of its own.

When, in 1483, Leonardo came to seek his fortune at Lodovico's court, that prince had been governing Milan for four years. His subjects had therefore had time to gain some idea of his character and tastes. Leonardo, who is sure to have gathered such information as he could concerning his new master, seems to have been quite aware



"THE CRUCIFIXION," BY MONTORFANO.
(Refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan.)

of the duke's weakness for the occult sciences. This, at any rate, was the string he played upon in Lodovico by the aid of a programme bewildering in its variety.

He proceeded to celebrate the virtues of his new patron in a series of allegories, more than usually abstruse, in which he represented him now wearing spectacles and standing between Envy and Justice, the

[1] He never formed any important resolution without consulting his favourite astrologer, Ambrogio da Rosate. He had also in his service the Jewish astrologer, Leone Giudeo, and the astrologer, Calcerando. (Uzielli, *Leonardo da Vinci e tre Gentildonne milanesi*, pp. 6, 41. See also the *Archivio storico lombardo*, 1874, p. 486.)

latter painted black (an allusion to Il Moro's dark complexion again); now as Fortune, or as victor over Poverty, covering with a corner of his ducal mantle a youth pursued by the hideous hag, and protecting him with a wand.[1]

Despite the many affinities between the artist and his patron, there is nothing to prove that Leonardo was among Il Moro's intimates. To begin with, where did he lodge? In the castle? I doubt it, as he took pupils to live with him. We must picture him as living an independent life, except at such times as he mingled with the crowd of courtiers who accompanied Sforza on his incessant peregrinations to Pavia, to Vigevano, to the Sforzesca. It would even appear, judging from the rough draft of a letter published by Amoretti, that Leonardo was sometimes whole months without seeing his patron. "I take the liberty"—such is the gist of the letter, which is unfortunately incomplete—"to remind your Grace of my humble affairs. You have forgotten me,



STUDY OF A YOUNG WOMAN.
(Windsor Library)

[1] "Il Moro cogl' occhiali e la Invidia colla falsa Infamia dipinta, e la Giustitia nera pel Moro. Il Moro in figura di Ventura colli cappelli e panni e mani inanzi, e Messer Gualtieri con riverente atto lo piglia per li panni da basso, venendoli dalla parte dinanzi. Ancora la Povertà in figura spaventevole corra dietro a un giovinetto, e'l Moro lo copra col lembo della veste, e colla verga dorata minacia cotale mostro." (Amoretti, pp. 50–51. Richter, vol. i. p. 350.)

affirming that my silence is the cause of your displeasure But my life is at your service ; I am continually ready to obey," etc.

Assuredly these Italian courts of the fifteenth century had more regard for talent than for birth ; it would, indeed, have been absurd in upstarts like the Sforzi to have laid great stress on length of lineage. Still, it was essential, if talent was to shine, and command the attention of the ruler, that it should be supplemented by polished manners, fluent speech, and a ready wit ; herein it was that the caustic Bramante excelled, and we learn from the *Cortigiano* of Baldassare Castiglione that another artist at Lodovico's court, Gian Cristoforo Romano, was not less brilliant in conversation.

Leonardo did not possess the gift of putting his ideas into concrete form to the same extent ; he had more fancy than imagination ; his creations, with a few rare exceptions, were remarkable rather for subtlety than vigour. Rabelais, who may quite possibly have come across him in some of his wanderings, would have dubbed him "a distiller of quintessences." For this handsome youth and accomplished cavalier—he was a first-rate horseman—was before all things a dreamer, more given to delving deep into an idea, and resolving it into its elements, than to catching the attention of the crowd by some lively and vigorous evidence of his Florentine blood. In short, his love of analysis destroyed his synthetic faculty: I do not think there is a single *bon mot* of his to be recorded. We cannot expect epigrams from such a character. Leonardo had too much respect for the demands of science to amuse himself with brilliant generalisations ; he never quite lost sight of earth in his flights, and this very reserve gave to his thoughts—and who deserves the title of thinker more than he?—an indescribable savour of reality, a tincture of profoundly human quality. With him we never fall into the purely abstract.

It is not without a certain approval that we recognise an indifferent courtier in the great artist and thinker. Though he had to reproach himself with many weaknesses, Leonardo never owed success to an astutely woven intrigue.

It would be hopeless to attempt to disentangle any exact conclusions as to Leonardo's financial situation while in Lodovico's

service from the complicated public accounts of the period. Besides a fixed salary, he probably received sums in proportion to the importance of his work (according to Bandello, he had 2,000 ducats per annum—about £4,000—during the execution of the *Last Supper*). He himself valued his time at 5 lire a day for "invention." Profanity!—to estimate in pence the value of time like his, the price of a day of intellectual labour which was to bring forth a masterpiece destined to dazzle mankind throughout the ages. He should have said—nothing for the conception, but so much for the painting. But if we would avoid misjudgments, we must adapt ourselves to the point of view of a time which confounded the artist with the artisan (the word *artista* still has this double meaning in Italian), a fusion or confusion, whichever one likes to call it, on which, deplorable as it is when we have to do with a Leonardo da Vinci, the greatness of the industrial arts in Italy, nay, perhaps, the vitality of art itself at that epoch, was in fact based. For no part of it was looked upon as an abstract conception or an isolated activity. Leonardo's own ideas as to the respective value of the different arts were summed up, according to Lomazzo, in this maxim: the more an art involves of physical fatigue, the baser it is.

The liberality of Lodovico Sforza has sometimes been called in question, Leonardo himself furnishing grounds for accusations against his patron. In a letter addressed to the duke, he complains bitterly of not having received his salary for two years, and of having consequently been compelled to advance nearly 15,000 lire on works connected with the equestrian statue of Duke Francesco Sforza, &c.[1] Two other *protégés* of Lodovico's, the poet Bellincioni[2] and the architect Bramante, were also loud in lamentations over their poverty. But who is unfamiliar with these jeremiads, so characteristic of the humanists and artists of the Renaissance! From Leonardo, in particular, reflections on the parsimony of his patron came very badly. Do we not know that he lived in lordly style, and kept half-a-dozen horses in his stables! His complaint refers in all probability to arrears imputable to the controllers of the Milanese finances, after the dowry

[1] Amoretti, p. 75.

[2] *Rime*, Bolognese ed., vol. ii, pp. 14, 19, 20, 39, 53–54, 79, 80, 81.

for Bianca Maria Sforza had drained the coffers of the state. Lodovico was, however, admittedly somewhat capricious in his display of generosity; one day, after exhibiting to the envoys of Charles VIII. of France, the priceless treasures of the Visconti and the Sforzi, he bestowed a very meagre present upon them, thereby running the risk of alienating personages of great importance at a critical moment of his career. Still, there is nothing to justify us in thinking that he was niggardly towards Leonardo. In April, 1499, only a few months before the catastrophe which cost him his throne, he made the artist a present of a vineyard of sixteen perches, in a suburb of Milan near the Vercelli gate, with powers to build upon it. Also, when Leonardo left Milan he was in a position to deposit 600 ducats (about £1,200) at the Monte di Pietà of Florence, and we know that he had lived at Milan in very lordly fashion.[1]

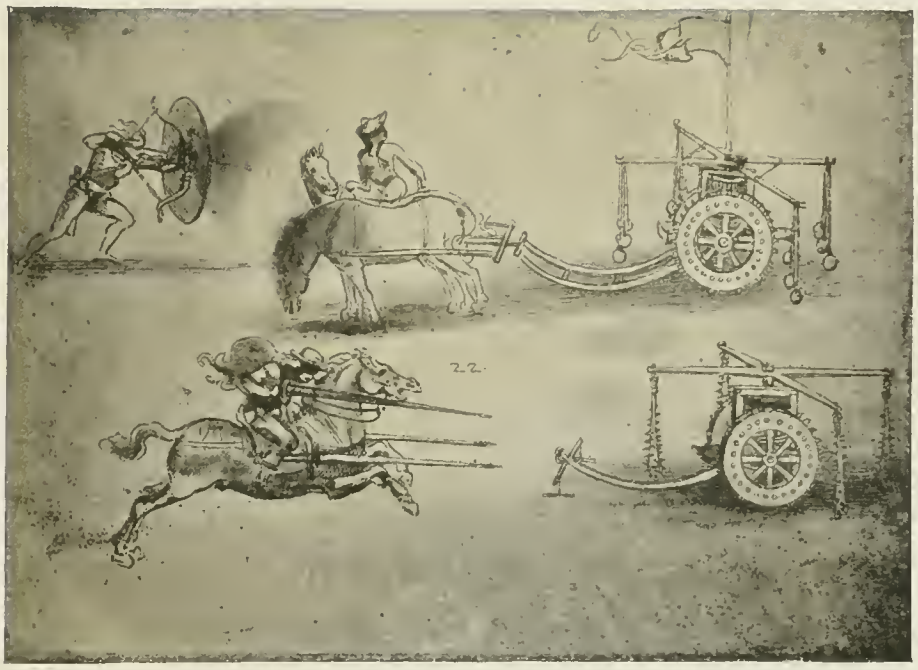
Whatever ideas intercourse with so cultured an amateur as Lodovico may have suggested to Leonardo, it was not in the power of any patron to influence the style of an artist of his calibre; it was the sight of a new country, its ambient air, the indirect and latent teachings to be gathered from it, which brought about his evolution. It is time to attack this problem. Having described the social aspect of the city in which da Vinci was called upon to show his powers, let us now see what the special art conditions of Milan were; let us see if, among his new fellow-citizens, there were any who, in the presence of such a master, had the right to call themselves initiators.

The history of the Milanese School during the second half of the fifteenth century has yet to be written.[2] Failing more definitive and deeper researches, we may, at least, call attention to some of its most essential features. In striking contrast to

[1] Leonardo, Vasari tells us, was liberality itself; he received and entertained all his friends, whether rich or poor, provided they had talent or merit. His presence alone sufficed to adorn and improve the most miserable and barest of houses. . . . Though possessing, in a certain sense, nothing of his own, and working but little, he had constantly about him servants and horses, of which he was passionately fond, as he was of all animals.

[2] An interesting essay in this direction has been made by Herr v. Seidlitz: *Springer Studien*. See also Dr. Bode's article in the *Jahrbuch der kg. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, 1886, p. 238 *et seq.*, and my *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, vol. ii, p. 787 *et. seq.*

Tuscany, which for more than two centuries had served as an art nursery to the rest of the peninsula, Lombardy had been constantly obliged to call in foreign masters: in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Giotto, Giovanni of Pisa, and Balduccio of Pisa, the somewhat mediocre sculptor of the famous reredos of Saint Peter Martyr in the church of S. Eustorgio; in the fifteenth century, Brunellesco, Masolino, Fra Filippo Lippi, Paolo Uccello; the architect Michelozzo, the most distinguished among the pupils of



DESIGNS FOR WAR CHARIOTS.
(Windsor Library.)

Brunellesco, and his fellow-students and compatriots, Benedetto of Florence, and Filarete. More even than these masters, Donatello had extended Florentine influence by establishing an advance post of Tuscany, at Padua. Roughly speaking, in the early Renaissance, just as in the time of Giotto, every reform introduced, every progress accomplished in Milan, received its impulse from Florence. Concurrently with Leonardo, architects of repute like Giuliano da San Gallo, Luca Fancelli, and Francesco di Giorgio Martini, arrived at the Lombard capital to confirm the prestige of the Tuscan school.

Bramante alone was of different origin, but would he have triumphed so rapidly in Milan if the Florentines had not paved the way? Brought up at Urbino, a pupil of the famous Dalmatian architect, Luciano da Laurana, who himself had figured for a brief period—in 1465—in the service of the Sforzi,[1] Bramante tempered the austerity of the Florentine style by a characteristic suavity and *morbidezza*.

It is with this prince of modern architects, the favourite of Lodovico and of Julius II., the kinsman and patron of Raphael, and, moreover, the only artist then in Italy who could measure himself with Leonardo, that I shall begin my review of the master's contemporaries at Milan.[2]

Bramante had preceded Leonardo to Milan, where he was established in 1474, perhaps even in 1472, and like Leonardo, he did not quit the enchanting land in which he had worked till towards the end of the century, on the very eve of the catastrophe that scattered for ever the brilliant court gathered round Il Moro. We know nothing of the relations between the two great artists. Leonardo only twice mentions Bramante in his writings, and that without any comment.[3] But their occupations must have brought them into frequent contact, and if they did not actually influence one another, they must have felt the mutual appreciation due to their transcendent powers.

At Milan Bramante was pre-eminently the architect of brick and terra cotta, in other words, of the rich, the varied, the picturesque. Dealing later with marble or travertino, he has no thought but for purity of line. He does not hesitate to sacrifice ornament. We have proof of this in his Roman buildings, the Cancelleria, the Palazzo Giraud, the loggie of the Vatican, the basilica of St. Peter's. These are models of finished classicism. But I greatly prefer the gay and vivacious buildings of Lombardy, where sculpture and architecture are gracefully blended, animating and restraining each other in turns.

A characteristic instance is the church of San Satiro at Milan, so dainty, but so harmonious, with its barrel-vaulted nave, its coffered

[1] Bertollotti, *Architetti, Ingegneri e Matematici in relazione coi Gonzaga*, p. 18, Genoa, 1889.

[2] See my *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, vol. ii., pp. 360, 394.

[3] Richter, Nos. 1414, 1448.

apse, enlarged by a cunning device of perspective, and its gorgeous octagonal baptistery. Another of Bramante's designs, the marvellous cupola of Santa Maria delle Grazie, has been criticised on the grounds that it is not sufficiently pure; it is, however, of sovereign elegance, with its rows of picturesque windows surmounted by an open arcade. In its airiness, its fanciful grace, we recognise the handiwork of an artist to whom structural difficulties were child's play.

It is, perhaps, out of place to speak of originality in an age given over to imitation, an epoch the mission of which was not creation, but resurrection. All Bramante's work was not equally original. Just as at Rome he came under the influence of Roman models, so in Lombardy he based his art on the old Lombard style, with its red brick churches, so dignified and yet so picturesque, and into it he infused a charm, distinction, and sense of rhythmical proportion such as have not since been granted to any master of the art of building. We may boldly declare that under him Milanese architecture eclipsed that of Florence. Recalcitrant as Leonardo may have been to contemporary influences, it seems difficult to imagine that he could have resisted the influence of such a wizard as Bramante.

As a painter, Bramante was essentially a follower of Mantegna, from whom he got his taste for perspective, for crumpled draperies, and for a certain hardness of transition.[1] To Vincenzo Foppa, according to Seidlitz, he went for the secrets of proportion.

A whole phalanx of sculptors, lively and piquant, suave and emotional, worked and shone at Bramante's side. There were first the Mantegazzi (Cristoforo, died 1482, and Antonio, died 1495), archaic but masterly, and easily recognisable by their twisted draperies, and their innumerable broken folds. Their contemporary, Giovanni Antonio Amadeo, or Omodeo (1447–1522), has more flexibility, as we see in the inspired bas-reliefs with which he has adorned the Certosa at Pavia, that vast elegy in marble. Benedetto Briosco (from 1483 onward) also distinguished himself at the Certosa. With Cristoforo Solari, surnamed "il Gobbo" (the hunchback), the Milanese

[1] Morelli, *Notizia d'Opere di Disegno*, ed. Frizzoni.—Semper, in *Kunst und Künstler*, by Dohme, p. 23–24.

school attains plenitude and freedom of form, as one may judge by the effigies for the tombs of Lodovico Sforza and Beatrice d'Este. A Roman sculptor and medallist, Gian Cristoforo Romano (established in Milan 1491, died 1512), is famous for his tomb of Gian Galeazzo Visconti in the Certosa at Pavia, his broadly-handled and characteristic bust of Beatrice d'Este in the Louvre, and his portrait medals of Isabella d'Este and Isabella of Aragon.[1] Finally, Ambrogio Foppa, surnamed "Il Caradosso" (born about 1452, died in 1526 or 1527), unites a charming ingenuousness to supreme distinction in his delicious bas-reliefs for the sacristy of San Satiro, and his medallion of Bramante. These masters formed a style less austere, less classic than that of the Florentines, but simpler, more varied, richer in life and poetry.



STUDIES OF HORSES.

(Windsor Library. From a photograph given by M. Rouveyre.)

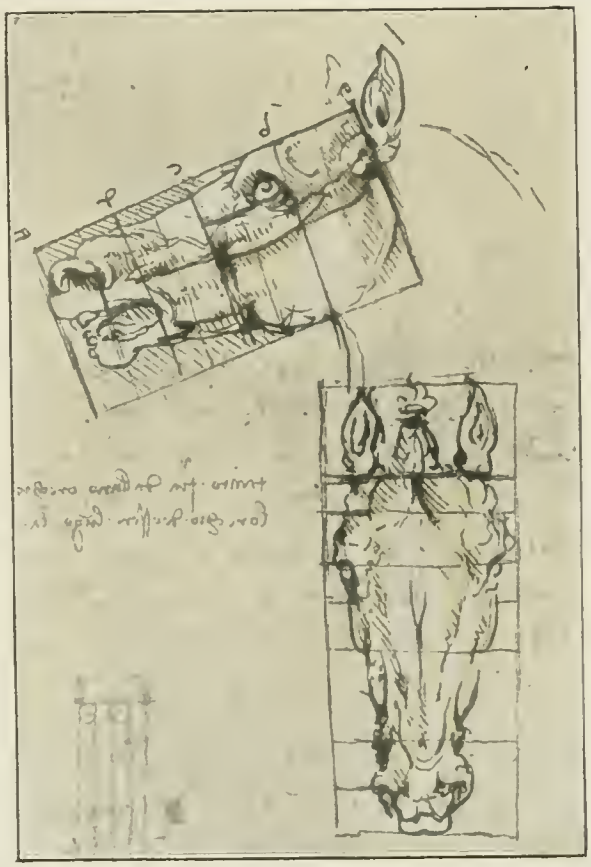
If we turn to the primitive school of Milan, we find ourselves in darkness and doubt. Scarcely a dozen pictures are of incontestable authenticity.[2] The history of the school has been still further confused, wantonly so, I might say, by Morelli, who, having taken a violent fancy to two obscure artists, Ambrogio de Predis and Bernardino

[1] See my *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, vol. ii. p. 516–518.—Venturi, *Archivio storico dell'Arte*, 1888, p. 55.—Bertolotti, *Figuli*, pp. 71, 89–90.

[2] See Passavant, *Kunstblatt*, 1838.—Seidlitz, *Gesammelte Studien zur Kunstgeschichte. Eine Festgabe für Anton Springer*, Leipzig, 1885.—*Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, vol. ii. p. 786 *et seq.*

dei Conti, endowed them with a series of works obviously not their own.[1]

To Morelli, however, belongs the credit of having determined the geographical limits of the Milanese School, and I cannot do better than reproduce his dictum: "The Adda separates the Bergamasque hills from the Milanese plain. At Canonica, on the frontier of the province of Bergamo, one still hears the guttural language of the Bergamasques; at Vaprio, at the opposite end of the bridge across the Adda, the Milanese dialect predominates, and the school which rose in Milan, the Lombardo-Milanese school, extended as far as Vaprio."[2]



STUDIES OF HORSES.
(Library of the Institut de France; from M. Ravaisson-Mollien's *Leonardo da Vinci.*)

That a Milanese school existed before Leonardo's arrival, no honest investigator will attempt to deny. It suffices to mention the names of Michelino, of Besozzo, from whom Leonardo borrowed the idea of an extravagant composition—a male and female peasant convulsed with laughter—of Vincenzo Foppa (settled in Milan as early as 1455), of Bernardo Zenale, of Buttinone, and of Ambrogio

[1] *Kunstkritische Studien über italienische Malerei. Die Galerien Borghese und Doria Pamfili in Rom. Die Galerien zu München und Dresden. Die Galerie zu Berlin.* Leipzig. 3 vols. 1890–1893.

[2] *Die Galerie zu Berlin*, p. 121.

Borgognone, all at the height of their activity when the young Florentine came to settle among them.[1]

This school, influenced in turn by Mantegna and the Venetians, borrowed from the former its taste for foreshortening, and for effects of perspective. (This is evident in the works of Foppa, for instance, of Bramante, who, we must not forget, was painter as well as architect, and of Montorfano.) It also adopted Mantegnesque types of physiognomy—the broad face and prominent jaw. The Venetians, for their part, had revealed the delights and subtleties of colour to a few Milanese painters, such as Andrea Solario, in tones alternately rich and brilliant, luminous and profound. But these Milanese precursors sought harmony rather than splendour in their schemes of colour: they delighted in amber tones, inclining sometimes to gray. Their works are consequently more or less subdued, but they never lack a sovereign distinction. Nothing could be more opposed to the comparatively dry and precise manner of the Florentines.

We are ignorant of the dates both of birth and death (1523, 1524?), of Ambrogio da Fossano, surnamed "Il Bergognone," or "Borgognone." We must be content to note that towards the end of the century this eminent master decorated the Certosa at Pavia with pictures and frescoes, in which are apparent now a striving after the precision so characteristic of primitive schools, now an incomparable suavity, as in his young saints standing beside S. Ambrose and S. Syrus (1492). Later on, towards 1517,[2] he executed his great fresco, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, in the church of S. Simpliciano at Milan. This wonderfully animated work abounds in lyric passages and prepossessing faces. I will note especially, amongst others, the Christ, and several youthful saints with short blonde beards. Inspired by Gothic models, these figures, in their turn, served as prototypes

[1] The Mantegnesque influence alternates with the Leonardesque in the miniatures of the fascinating *Book of Hours* of Bona Sforza, widow of Galeazzo Maria. (Warner: *Miniatures and Borders from the Book of Hours of Bona Sforza, Duchess of Milan, in the British Museum.* London, 1894.—Venturi, *L'Arte*, 1898.)

[2] Peraté, *La Grande Encyclopédie.*—Beltrami, *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1893, fasc. 1.—Gustave Gruyer, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1893, 1.—Dr. Bode attributes to Leonardo's influence the progress achieved by Borgognone in chiaroscuro, perhaps, too, the increased assurance of his design and his modelling (*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1889, vol. i. p. 426).

to Bernardino Luini, who, in truth, owes as much to Borgognone as to Leonardo. The whole is full of sweetness, but a little tame and woolly; it seems a faint echo from Umbria.

Less fortunate than Borgognone, Bernardo Zenale of Treviglio (born 1436, died 1526), architect and painter, has been deprived, for the moment, of any work with the slightest pretensions to authenticity. We do not even know which part is his and which that of his collaborator, Bernardino Buttinone, in the altarpiece of the church of Treviglio (1485). It would be futile, therefore, to discuss the pictures which figure under the name of Zenale in various galleries. Suffice it to remember that, on Vasari's testimony, this artist enjoyed the esteem of da Vinci, although his manner was harsh and somewhat dry.[1]

This primitive Milanese school developed side by side with Da Vinci, and some of its representatives wholly escaped the spell of that great magician. Among these was the designer (Bartolommeo Suardi, it is supposed) of the tapestries, representing *The Months*, executed at Vigevano between 1503 and 1507 for Marshal Trivulzio.[2] There is not the faintest reminiscence of Leonardo in these crowded compositions, the types in which are rough and repellent.

Another Milanese, Giovanni Ambrogio Preda, or de Predis, has more affinity with Leonardo. This artist makes his first appearance in 1482 (he then bore the title of court painter to Lodovico Sforza). In 1494 Maximilian commissioned him, with two collaborators, to engrave (at Milan ?) the dies for the new imperial coinage. In 1498, Preda and his brother Bernardino undertook to furnish the German sovereign with a wall-hanging (not a tapestry as has been supposed) consisting of six pieces in black embroidered velvet, the cartoons to be designed by Ambrogio.[3]

We are now familiar with a respectable number of portraits from Ambrogio Preda's brush: those of the young Archinto in the Fuller-

[1] The author of the *Catalogue of Pictures by Masters of the Milanese and allied Schools of Lombardy* (Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1898), endeavours to compile a list of Zenale's pictures, ascribing to him, among other things, the *Circumcision*, in the Louvre, dated 1491, and attributed to Bramantino.

[2] See my *Histoire de la Tapisserie en Italie*, p. 45.

[3] Motta: *Archivio storico lombardo*, 1893, p. 972–996.

Maitland collection in London[1] (1494), of the Emperor Maximilian (1502) in the Vienna Gallery, of the Empress Bianca Maria Sforza in the Arconati-Visconti collection in Paris,[2] &c. These portraits are noticeable for a smooth, occasionally dry execution akin to that of the miniaturist, according to Dr. Bode. Towards the close of his life Morelli attempted to rob Leonardo of the charming portrait of a



PORTRAIT OF GAIN GALEAZZO SFORZA, BY V. FOPPA.
(Wallace Museum, London.)

young woman in the Ambrosiana in favour of this conscientious, but uninspired master!

Sensibly inferior to Ambrogio is his contemporary, Bernardino dei Conti, who worked, approximately, from 1499 to 1522. He has been credited, among other things, with *The Family of*

[1] Lately acquired for the National Gallery.—Ed.

[2] A pen and ink sketch after these two portraits, by the goldsmith and medallist, Gian Marco Cavalli, is in the Accademia at Venice, where it long figured under the name of Leonardo da Vinci. See Herr v. Schneider's article in the *Jahrbuch der kais. Kunstsammlungen*, 1893, p. 187 *et seq.* See also Dr. Bode's article in the *Jahrbuch der kg. Pr. Kunstsammlungen*, 1889, ii., and that by Miss Ffoulkes in the *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1894, p. 250.

Lodovico il Moro in the Brera, formerly attributed to Zenale, and the *Madonna Litta* in the Hermitage, hitherto dignified by the glorious name of Leonardo da Vinci. To be frank, this painter was, to use Dr. Bode's happy definition, one of the greatest nonentities among the Lombards of his time, and as such he reveals himself in his few authentic works: the portrait of a cardinal, in the Berlin Gallery (1499), the portrait of a man in profile in the Vittadini collection at Milan (1500), that of the young Catellano Trivulzio, in the Pallavicini-Trivulzio collection at Turin (1505), &c. All these figures are distinguished by a dry precision, proper rather to the burin than the brush. Consequently, if the sympathetic portrait of a Milanese lady, in profile, in the Morrison collection really belongs to Conti, he must at one time have adopted a freer manner and a richer impasto.



STUDY OF A HORSEMAN.
(Windsor Library.)

It has often been maintained that the change in Leonardo's style in his new place of abode was due to the influence of the school he found there. "A Florentine when he arrived in Milan," writes the learned and brilliant Marchese d'Adda, "Leonardo left it a Milanese." And further on he adds: "An art, peculiar to and savouring of its native soil, sprang up in Lombardy from the union of Tuscan and Paduan traditions. Mantegna had Milanese disciples who took back with them the

traditions of Squarcione. The works of the elder Foppa, Leonardo da Besozzo, Buttinone, Civerchio, Troso da Monza, and Zenale da Treviglio, are proof enough that a veritable and even highly-developed art existed in Milan long before the arrival of Leonardo."[1]

But was the change in Leonardo as distinctly marked as they would have us believe, and moreover, did the example of the Lombard artists count for so much in it as is asserted? I do not hesitate, for my part, to answer, no, and for these reasons: the works executed at the beginning of his sojourn in Milan, the *Virgin of the Rocks*, for instance, prove that the youthful Leonardo was already gifted with elegance, sweetness, and grace in a greater degree than any master who had preceded him. On the other hand, no genius was ever more recalcitrant to the teaching and suggestions of others than his; the imitative faculty was wholly wanting in him. And, after all, what were these Lombard masters whom we are to look upon as the teachers of the Florentine Proteus? Some were content to paint sober and impassive figures in various tones of gray; others followed more or less faithfully the traditions of the school of Padua, which means that they were devoted to principles in every way opposed to those of Leonardo (even in Bramante's pictures, as we have said above, the influence of Mantegna is apparent in the hardness of the outline, and the excessive preoccupation with perspective).[2] Leonardo's manner, on the contrary, rests on the suppression of all that is angular and precise; his painting is above all things fused, melting, *enveloppé*; the outlines of his figures lose themselves in intensity of light, in harmony of colour. Again, the Milanese primitives assiduously cultivated fresco, whereas Leonardo, unfortunately for himself, and for us, persistently avoided that process during his sojurn in Milan, and also after his return to

[1] *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1868, vol. ii, p. 128. Impartiality further forces me to quote M. de Tauzia's opinion. The former keeper of the pictures in the Louvre asserts that "Leonardo borrowed his types from the Milanese masters who preceded him. One is easily convinced of this, he adds, by the *Book of Hours* of Bianca Maria Visconti, produced in 1460, long before Leonardo came to Milan; it looks like the work of one of his pupils." (*Catalogue*, p. 225).

[2] If it were certain that the engravings of the *Two Beggars* and the *Heads of Old Men*, attributed to Mantegna, were really by that master, then Leonardo might be said to have sought inspiration from him sometimes. But everything tends to prove that here we are working in a vicious circle, and that the engravings are to be referred rather to Leonardo himself than to Mantegna.

Florence. He painted the *Last Supper* in oil, and prepared to paint the *Battle of Anghiari* in encaustic.

A last and still more convincing argument is furnished by the fresco in the Refectory of S. Maria delle Grazie, opposite to Leonardo's *Last Supper*, the *Crucifixion*, by Giovanni Donato Montorfano (1495). Here we find no affinity with Leonardo; on the other hand, reminiscences of Mantegna abound in the hard dry modelling, the angular contours, the crumpled draperies. Both conception and execution are, moreover, of the poorest. The founder of the new school of Milan loved to simplify; his compeer, the representative of the old school, subdivided and complicated his work as much as he could; the principal action disappears in episodes; more than fifty persons, of whom several, such as S. Dominic and S. Clara, are quite alien to the subject, dispute our attention. And how feeble are the heads, how flaccid the gestures and the attitudes of the swooning Virgin, the saint wringing his hands! how stiff are the horses, what a lack of intention and harmony we note in the colour, which is more like that of a missal than of a monumental fresco! Sacred iconography, singularly neglected by Leonardo, holds an important place in Montorfano's work. Over the penitent thief, the parting soul, in obedience to the tradition of the middle ages, is represented in the form of a child. A movable nimbus, a sort of flattened disc, encircles the head of the Virgin, and those of her companions, the confessors and the doctors of the Church. By an anachronism frequent enough in religious art (we need only mention Fra Angelico's *Crucifixion* in the Monastery of San Marco), these latter assist at the drama of Golgotha. Certain of the types, the attitudes, the effects of perspective, the careful exactitude in the archæological details, recall Mantegna, as I have said. It is, however, impossible to confound Montorfano's work with that of any member of the School of Padua: the types have a strongly accentuated Milanese character, with their somewhat square-jawed faces, and long waving hair (S. John the Evangelist). A horseman on the right suggests Luini by his bold and gallant bearing.

Montorfano's work would not have aroused enthusiasm anywhere, but it was, indeed, a disaster for it to be placed opposite to that of

Leonardo; and yet, like certain vulgar natures, it enjoys rude health where the man of genius languishes and dies. The *Last Supper* is a ruin; the *Crucifixion* has preserved all its original brilliance of colour.[1] I am far from denying that on the whole, his sojourn in Lombardy exercised a profound effect upon Leonardo's style; but, in the change, nature counted for much, art for little, if for anything at all. Compared with the Tuscan landscape, that of Upper Italy, and particularly that



AN ALLEGORY OF ENVY.

(Library of Christ Church College, Oxford.)

of the province of Milan, is as exuberant as the other is proud and graceful; the country is clothed with an abundant vegetation, and intersected by innumerable water-courses; mulberries with shining leaves replace the dull grayness of the olive; the air is soft; the scenery of the lakes delicious; in short, our impressions are those of a

[1] De Geymüller is inclined to believe that Bramante furnished Montorfano with the sketch for the view of Jerusalem in the background of the *Crucifixion* (*Les projets primitifs pour la basilique de Saint-Pierre de Rome*, p. 48).

more temperate zone, and of a kinder sky. As the climate is, so are the inhabitants: to the Florentine type, thin, meagre, and poor, the duchy of Milan opposes amplitude, grace, suavity, purer lines, and a more delicate complexion, creamy rather than sallow; refined or voluptuous lips, large and melting eyes, full round chins, and slender, undulating figures. This type, which has been christened Leonardesque, because Leonardo recorded its perfection, is still to be met in all its beauty about the Lago Maggiore and the Lake of Como.



A BEGGAR OR CONVICT.
(Windsor Library.)

The intellectual differences between the Milanese and the Florentines did not weigh less heavily in the balance. At Milan, Leonardo found a public unaccustomed to criticise and prone to enthusiasm: qualities most precious to a man of imagination, to an artist with whom freshness of impression and independence of form meant so much.

Subjected to the demands of the Florentine studios, Art, on the banks of the Arno, had fallen into affectation or extravagance (on this subject see p. 20). The one idea of the Tuscans was to astonish by subtlety of contrivance or boldness of design: beauty pure and simple seemed to them commonplace. Mannerism triumphed all along the line: with Botticelli, with Filippino Lippi, with Pollajuolo. Each outvied the other in torturing his style, in showing himself more complex and more inventive than his neighbour. The artistic coteries

of Florence devoted themselves to artificial research, and were governed by conventional formulæ ; dexterity took the place of conviction, and everything was reduced to calculation, or to merely technical skill ; in short, no one could be simple or natural, and so eloquence, in the best sense, was a lost quality.

At Milan, on the other hand, imaginations were still fertile and fresh ; if there was less science, there was more sincerity. What life and youth breathe from the sculptures of the Pavian Certosa, in itself a world ! A superior genius was bound, not only to animate and fertilise such germs, but to refresh his own spirit, in this new and invigorating atmosphere. In fact, the unresting mental activity peculiar to the Florentine, his conscious and deliberate effort, generated naturally a race of draughtsmen, while the soft languor, the native grace, the exquisite suavity inherent in the Milanese, as inevitably created colourists. There is a moment in the lives of certain predestined spirits when expatriation becomes a necessity. Raphael, had he remained in Umbria, would never have been more than a greater Perugino ; Michelangelo, too, obtained his supreme impetus from Rome. As to Leonardo, it was by the resources of a considerable state, the brilliant festivals, the intercourse with intellectual and distinguished men, and, above all, by an atmosphere less *bourgeois* and democratic than that of Florence, that the sudden and unprecedented evolution of his genius was brought about. At Florence he would have become the first of painters ; at Milan, he became that and something more ; a great poet and a great thinker. From this point of view we have every right to say that he owed much to his new country.

In the literary circle of Milan, admittedly mediocre as it was, a playful freedom obtained quite unknown among the Florentine purists. As a typical product of the prevailing spirit, we may take the tournament, or encounter of wits, that took place between Bellincioni, Maccagni of Turin, and Gasparo Visconti, on the one hand, and Bramante on the other. One of the epigrams aimed at the architect-poet compares him to Cerberus, because of his biting humour.

Quis canis ? Erigones ? Minime ! Cerberus ille
Tenareus, famæ nominibusque inocens.

Elsewhere his opponents, in reality his closest friends, attack him for his immoderate love of pears, or for his avarice : " Bramante," writes Visconti, " you are a man devoid of courtesy, you never cease importuning me for a pair of shoes, and all the time you are laying up a hoard of money for yourself. It seems to you a slight thing to force me to keep you. Why do you not get the Court to pay for you? You have a salary of five ducats a month [from the Duke]." To which Bramante replies by a sonnet in which he piteously describes the dilapidations of his wardrobe. He begs Visconti to bestow a crown on him in charity, if he would not see him condemned to struggle naked with Boreas.

Vesconte, non te casche
Questo da core, ma fa ch'io n'habia un scudo
Tal ch'io non giostro più con Borrea ignudo.
E se poi per te sudo
El mio sudor verra dela tue pelle
Ma non scoter pero pero (*sic*) la sete a quelle.[1]

There was no pedantry, at any rate, in Lodovico's circle. Though his finances were often embarrassed, and his æsthetics selfish and subtle, he loved art, and placed the worship of the beautiful above all things.

Leonardo, as I shall presently show, did not disdain to take occasional part in the poetic jousts of this joyous company. The men of letters of Upper Italy soon adopted him as one of themselves ; he was as proud of their glory as if he had been born in their midst. In his lifetime they vied with one another in lauding his masterpieces. After his death the historians, romance-writers and philosophers of his adopted country were his most ardent apologists. I may mention Paolo Giovio, Bishop of Como, Matteo Bandello, the author of the *Novelle*, and Lomazzo, the painter and writer, author of the *Trattato della Pittura* and of the *Idea del Tempio della Pittura*.

To sum up : if, with the exception of Bramante, Milan possessed no artist capable of measuring himself with Leonardo, and, still less, any capable of influencing him, on the other hand, no surroundings could have been more propitious to his genius than those she offered. A splendour-loving and enlightened prince, an active, wealthy, and

[1] *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1879, vol. ii. p. 514 *et seq.* Cf. Beltrami, *Bramante poeta*.

educated population, a phalanx of capable artists who asked for nothing better than to follow the lead of a master-mind from that Florence whence light has been shed for so long over Italy; finally, the vigorous and inspiring suggestions of a landscape at once exuberant and grandiose; can we imagine elements better fitted than these to stimulate the genius of Leonardo, and to kindle in his breast a love for the country he was now to make his own?





FRIEZE BY CARADOSSO.
Church of San Satiro, Milan.)

CHAPTER V

LEONARDO'S DÉBUT AT THE COURT OF MILAN—HIS PROGRAMME—THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF FRANCESCO SFORZA—LEONARDO AS A SCULPTOR—HIS INFLUENCE ON THE SCULPTURE OF NORTHERN ITALY



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."
(Valton Collection, Paris.)

WHEN Leonardo resolved to try his fortunes at the court of the Sforzi, he was already known there by the famous shield acquired by Duke Galeazzo Maria (+ 1476).

We possess a remarkable document in the master's own hand [1] which bears upon his opening relations with the Milanese capital, namely, the letter in which he offers his services to Lodovico il Moro, at that time regent of the duchy for his nephew Gian Galeazzo. This epistle can hardly be called a monument of diffidence, as the reader will presently have an oppor-

[1] This manuscript, preserved in the Ambrosiana, is written from left to right, and not, like the rest of Leonardo's manuscripts, from right to left. M. Charles Ravaisson-Mollien has pronounced against its authenticity (*Les Ecrits de Léonard de Vinci*, p. 34).—Richter (*The literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. ii. pp. 34, 395—398) and Uzielli (*Ricerche*, 2nd ed. vol. i. p. 85—89), on the other hand, consider it to be a genuine production of Leonardo's. This is also my opinion.

tunity of judging; in it the painter, the sculptor, the architect, the military and hydraulic engineer, come forward and make their boast in turn.

"Having, most illustrious lord, seen and duly considered the experiments of all those who repute themselves masters in the art of inventing instruments of war, and having found that their instruments differ in no way from such as are in common use, I will endeavour, without wishing to injure any one else, to make known to your Excellency certain secrets of my own; as briefly enumerated here below:—

"1. I have a way of constructing very light bridges, most easy to carry, by which the enemy may be pursued and put to flight. Others also of a stronger kind, that resist fire or assault, and are easy to place and remove. I know ways also for burning and destroying those of the enemy.

"2. In case of investing a place I know how to remove the water from ditches and to make various scaling ladders and other such instruments.

"3. Item: If, on account of the height or strength of position, the place cannot be bombarded, I have a way for ruining every fortress which is not on stone foundations.

"4. I can also make a kind of cannon, easy and convenient to transport, that will discharge inflammable matters, causing great injury to the enemy and also great terror from the smoke.

"5. Item: By means of winding and narrow underground passages, made without noise, I can contrive a way for passing under ditches or any stream.

"9. (*sic*) And, if the fight should be at sea, I have numerous engines of the utmost activity both for attack and defence; vessels that will resist the heaviest fire—also powders or vapours.

"6. Item: I can construct covered carts, secure and indestructible, bearing artillery, which, entering among the enemy, will break the strongest body of men, and which the infantry can follow without impediment.

"7. I can construct cannon, mortars and fire-engines of beautiful and useful shape, and different from those in common use.

"8. Where the use of cannon is impracticable, I can replace them by catapults, mangonels and engines for discharging missiles of admirable efficacy and hitherto unknown—in short, according as the case may be, I can contrive endless means of offence.

"10. In time of peace, I believe I can equal any one in architecture and in constructing buildings, public or private, and in conducting water from one place to another.[1]

"Then I can execute sculpture, whether in marble, bronze, or terra-cotta; also in painting I can do as much as any other, be he who he may.

"Further, I could engage to execute the bronze horse in lasting memory of your father and of the illustrious house of Sforza, and, if any of the above-mentioned things should appear impossible and impracticable to you, I offer to make trial of them in your park, or in any other place that may please your Excellency, to whom I commend myself in utmost humility."

The artist, we know, performed even more than he promised, but did the military engineer carry out this amazing programme? That is a question which I shall endeavour to answer in due course.

In all probability, Leonardo set to work immediately after his arrival in Milan upon the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, an undertaking which occupied him, at intervals, for seventeen years.

Rumours of the discussions which had been going on for ten years as to the choice of a suitable design must, of course, have reached Leonardo, and in the memorial addressed to Lodovico, he declares himself ready—as we have seen—to undertake the execution of the "cavallo," otherwise the equestrian statue.[2]

[1] It is interesting to note here, that by a decree of May 16, 1483, Lodovico ordered the construction of a canal between the Adda and Milan.

[2] The history of this equestrian statue has been traced, though with too evident a bias, by M. Louis Courajod in his *Léonard de Vinci et la Statue de François Sforza* (1879), by M. Bonnaffé in his *Sabba da Castiglione* (1884, p. 12—14) and more recently by Herr Müller-Walde in the *Jahrbuch der kg. Kunstsammlungen* (1897, p. 92—169). The German author claims to have discovered a clue, enabling him to distinguish between the drawings which refer to the Sforza statue, and those for the statue of Trivulzio. Unfortunately, the results of Herr Müller-Walde's labours had not yet been given to the public when the present volume went to press.

Had Leonardo remained in Florence, he might very easily have painted a *Last Supper* equal to that of Santa Maria delle Grazie for some monastery of his native city, but he most certainly would never have been commissioned to execute a piece of sculpture such as the equestrian statue of Duke Francesco, as conspicuous in dimensions as for the idea of supremacy and sway it was calculated to impress on the beholder. The doctrine of equality, so jealously insisted upon by the Florentine populace, had long relegated sculpture to the sphere of religion ; the utmost that the Republic had done in any other spirit being to accord the honour of monumental tombs to her chancellors, Leonardo Bruni and Carlo Marsuppini. But to have set up in a public place the statue of a condottiere, and, worse still, of one whose family still claimed sovereignty, would have raised a storm of indignation among the keenly susceptible citizens. As well propose that they should return to the worship of graven images! Hence any Florentine sculptor who wished to execute monumental statues was forced to seek such commissions elsewhere than at home : Donatello at Padua (the equestrian statue of Gattamelata) ; Baroncelli at Ferrara (the equestrian statue of Niccolò d'Este), Verrocchio, at Venice (the equestrian statue of Colleone), and lastly, Leonardo at Milan.



EQUESTRIAN BAS-RELIEF OF ANNIBALE BENTIVOGLIO (1458), BY NICCOLÒ DELL' ARCA.

(Church of San Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna.)



6

Studies of Horses.

(WINDSOR CHECKS)



Printed by Draeger, Paris.

Duke Francesco Sforza died in 1466, but it was not till 1472 that his successor, Galeazzo Maria, conceived the project of giving the founder of the House of Sforza a monument worthy of him, a tomb which, like that of the Scaligeri at Verona, should be surmounted by an equestrian statue of the deceased hero. For ten long years artist after artist was consulted, plan after plan submitted and rejected. On the refusal or the retirement from the contest of the brothers Mantegazza, the gifted sculptors of the Certosa at Pavia, Galeazzo Maria applied to the famous Florentine sculptor and painter, Antonio del Pollajuolo. After his death in 1498 "they found the design and the model which he had made for the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, ordered by Lodovico il Moro. This model is represented in two different styles in his drawings now in my collection: the one showing Duke Francesco with Verona under his feet, the other, the same Duke in full armour riding over an armed man. I could never discover why this design was not carried out" (Vasari). It is this second conception which Morelli recognised in a drawing in the Print Room at Munich, whereas Louis Courajod declared it to be the sketch for Leonardo's statue. Not, adds the learned Director of the Louvre, that there is anything against the supposition that Pollajuolo



EQUESTRIAN BAS-RELIEF BY LEONARDO DA PRATO (1511).
(Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.)

may have seen and drawn Leonardo's model. Richter, again, suggests that this design—a horse rearing above a prostrate man—was obligatory for all the competitors. For my part, I must say, that if the drawing at Munich represents Leonardo's work, it is a singularly clumsy and ineffective rendering. Nothing could be more wooden and lifeless than the hind-quarters of the horse, and the forelegs, which are very evidently ankylosed, are equally faulty in treatment. The head and neck alone have a certain amount of spirit. As to the rider, his seat is awkward and undignified in the extreme, and the *ensemble* is wholly wanting in those monumental, rhythmic, one might almost say melodious lines, which were so obviously Leonardo's main preoccupation in the drawings at Windsor.[1]

The study of the horse was a passion with Leonardo ; numberless drawings show him seeking to fix the noble beast's physiognomy, and analyse its movements.[2]

In the *Adoration of the Magi*, he forgets the ostensible subject, and fills up the whole of the middle distance with horses in every conceivable variety of spirited attitude. In the subsequent *Battle of Anghiari* he returned to his favourite theme, and created the most

[1] Müller-Walde is of opinion that Pollajuolo's drawing was made in 1489—immediately after the letter to Lorenzo the Magnificent, complaining of Leonardo's incompetence (*Jahrbuch der kg. Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, p. 125). But one must beware of these all too convenient inferences. Things rarely happen just as we imagine—realities prove more shifting, less logical. M. de Fabriczy believes the drawing in question to refer to an equestrian statue which Pollajuolo offered to erect to Gentile Virginio Orsini in 1494 (*Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 1892, p. 250). M. de Geymüller goes still further—he does not consider the Munich drawing to be worthy even of Pollajuolo (*Les derniers Travaux sur Léonard de Vinci*, p. 42).

A picture by Bacchiacca in the Uffizi (reproduced in my *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, vol. iii. p. 697) shows striking analogies with the Munich drawing, except that the horse's head, instead of being in profile as in the drawing, is turned toward the spectator, a detail which gives a singular look of animation to the composition. Bacchiacca's horse, too, rears firmly up on its hind legs, instead of seeming to sink under its burden, and the rider is not bare-headed, but wears a cap. This rearing horse—a reminiscence of the Colossi of Monte Cavallo—is a very favourite motive in sixteenth century art: we meet with it in Raphael's *St. George* of the Louvre, in his *Meeting between S. Leo and Attila*, and *The Victory of Constantine :* also in Ducerceau's chimney pieces at Ecouen, etc.

[2] In his first attempt, Leonardo seems to have given his horses squat, disjointed forms—witness the studies of horses and cats in the Library at Windsor. This, too, is his type in a drawing of the *Deluge* (Richter, vol. i. pl. xxxiv). But what movement, what fire, what passion he puts into his heroic steeds later on !

stirring cavalry combat that art has handed down to us. The fire, the vehemence of the master defy description whenever he throws himself into the delineation of this grand creature, the noblest of man's conquests in the animal world. In every line one recognises the enthusiastic horseman delighting to urge his mount to its utmost speed, or to make it bound and rear. The rebellion of the wonderful living machine only excited and intoxicated him. To him we owe the prototype of the war-horse, of the epic charger, as it has come down to us through Raphael, Salvator Rosa, Rubens, and Le Brun. Even Velasquez shows its influence. The advent of the English horse, wiry and long-barreled, put an end to an ideal type essentially suited to historical painting.

Obedient to his habits as a man of science, Leonardo, before taking the trowel in hand, set himself to collect all available information on the horse in general, and equestrian statues in particular. Although he was thoroughly at home in every branch of the noble art of horsemanship, he seems to have attacked the subject "ab ovo," and weeks, months, even years passed, in experiments on the anatomy and locomotion of horses. Nor was he less interested in the study of equestrian statues—the bibliography of the subject, so to speak—the principal models which he consulted being the horses on the Monte Cavallo and the mounted statue of Marcus Aurelius at Rome, the four horses at Venice [1] and, finally, Donatello's equestrian statue of Gattamelata at Padua. Verrocchio's work in connection with the Colleone statue for Venice could have afforded him but little assistance, for though it was begun in 1479, four years before the statue of Francesco Sforza, it was still unfinished in 1488, the year of Verrocchio's death.[2]

Nevertheless, all that we know concerning Leonardo's habit of mind justifies us in affirming that his study of pre-existing models did not go very deep. He who had declared that "to copy another artist

[1] A horse in the style of those at Venice, which may also be compared with a drawing attributed to Verrocchio in the Louvre, was engraved by Zoan Andrea (see Ottley, p. 566). —Three horses' heads in Leonardo's style were also engraved by him (Bartsch, 24, pl. v. p. 106).

[2] Richter claims to discover a reminiscence of Verrocchio's work in a drawing at Windsor (pl. lxxiv.)—See also Courajod, p. 32.

instead of copying nature" was to make one's self "not the son, but the grandson of nature," in other words, the echo of an echo, would not be likely to examine the works of his predecessors with a very attentive eye; in point of fact, no artist was ever less of an imitator than Leonardo. It was from living models—those fiery steeds which none knew better than he how to manage—and from them alone, that he drew his inspiration (Richter, vol. ii. pl. lxxiii.). We cannot but feel that even when he did study the statue of Marcus Aurelius[1] or of Gattamelata (Richter, pl. lxxii., no. 3), he did so only from a conscientious feeling, without conviction and without enthusiasm. His copies of these works are vague and uncertain to a degree. And this being so, we are not surprised to find him ignoring more archaic creations, such as Niccolo dell' Arca's equestrian bas-relief at Bologna.



STUDIES FOR THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF FRANCESCO SFORZA.
(Windsor Library, reproduced from Dr. Richter's book.)

There is a point, however, at which—perhaps unconsciously to himself—he comes under the influence of the antique. The heads of his horses, with their dilated nostrils, recall the classic type, rather than the calmer and more prosaic breed of Tuscany and Lombardy.

Leonardo hesitated long even over the general outline of the monument. The drawings at Windsor[2] show how hard he found it to decide

[1] He makes a note in his memoranda of Messire Galeazzo's great jennet and Messire Galeazzo's Sicilian horse (Richter, vol. ii. p. 14).

[2] Richter (vol. ii. p. lxv., lxvi.)

between a circular and a square base. The first design shows some affinity with the mausoleum of Hadrian (the fortress of S. Angelo at Rome) and is surmounted—not very appropriately, it must be



EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF GATTAMELATA, BY DONATELLO, AT PADUA.

acknowledged—by an equestrian statue. But immediately afterwards, on the same sheet of paper (which shows that these various sketches must belong to the earliest of his experiments),[1] comes a sketch

[1] One of the drawings at Windsor (no. 84) in which the horse rears above a fallen warrior who tries to defend himself, was certainly among the first attempts. This is evident in the want of breadth of the horse's body and in the insignificant treatment of the base.

The course of these fluctuating conceptions has been vividly brought before us by

in which he places on the entablature of the base, now ornamented with pillars and pediments—seated figures, captives, in bold and vigorous relief (an arrangement adopted later by Michelangelo, and thenceforth a very favourite one during the Renaissance). Above this rises the equestrian statue.

I think I may say without disparagement to the memory of the great artist that more than any of his contemporaries, Leonardo kicked against the restraints of architecture, the necessity, for instance, of blending figures with their surroundings in order to produce a decorative effect. In all sketches for the monument his embarrassment is patent as soon as he attempts to bring the statue into harmony with the base. But let him draw the horse by itself, or merely with its rider, and whether he depicts the animal as rearing above a fallen warrior (Richter, pl. lxviii., lxix.), or stepping majestically, its head arched over its breast (pl. lxx.), or proudly raised (pl. lxxi.), he shows an incomparable freedom and assurance.

The studies for the Sforza monument are, for the most part, vague in the extreme ; it would be impossible to reconstruct the final design through them. And the reason for this is not far to seek : the fundamental idea once fixed in the artist's mind, he no longer works with pencil or pen, but with the trowel ; it is not on paper that he records his experiments, but in clay.[1] Why waste time in drawing on

Louis Courajod. Let me, for the moment, borrow his eloquent pen. "While by an ardent study of the anatomy of the horse—a study which apparently goes far beyond the exigencies of sculpture—Leonardo takes every means of ensuring the charm of marvellous execution in his work, the entire composition is shaping itself in his mind. The picture of a colossal monument rises up before him—a gigantic pedestal grouped about with figures, and surmounted by the hero. The statue seems at first to have been associated with the idea of a fountain ; the horse, stepping composedly forward, overturns with its fore-foot a vase, from which water flows. This ingenious allegory would recall the fact that Lombardy had been given a marvellous system of irrigation by its rulers. Another symbol is added to complete it—under the uplifted hind-foot of the steed is a tortoise, the placid and appropriate denizen of the moist plains about Milan : it still swarms in the enclosure of the Certosa of Pavia. Thus conceived, the statue would be emblematic of a pacific ruler, a protector of agriculture. Meanwhile, Leonardo hollows in the pedestal a niche destined to receive the recumbent statue of the Duke. We know that the colossal monument was intended, primarily, for a tomb."

[1] My hypothesis as to the date of these drawings is corroborated by the fact that studies of the horse walking and galloping, of a circular and of a rectangular pedestal, are found on the same page. Dr. Richter states that among the sketches referring to the casting of the statue, six show the horse walking, but only one represents it galloping.

a flat surface a figure which will eventually be executed in the round? At the most, it serves only to give an idea of the general outline.

Leonardo was not one to make rapid decisions, and Lodovico il Moro had not the fortitude to make a plan and keep strictly to it; doubtless, too, his much-admired artist unsettled his mind anew each time they met, by laying some fresh design before him. As we have already seen, he made suggestion after suggestion—now the huge pedestal was circular, now rectangular, now in the shape of a rotunda, now of a triumphal arch; then again, it was to surmount a deep cavity containing the recumbent figure of the deceased Duke, and so forth. Finally, Sforza, worn out by these incessant discussions, begged Pietro Alemanni, the Florentine ambassador at Milan, to ask Lorenzo the Magnificent to send him one or two sculptors capable of executing the statue in question. The Duke, adds Alemanni, being afraid that Leonardo, who had been commissioned to make the model, was hardly equal to the task![1]

This threat to supplant him evidently had the desired effect of rousing Leonardo from his apathy, for we have indubitable proof that by the following year the work was once more in full swing. Under the date of April 23 we find this pregnant entry among his memoranda: "To-day I began this book and re-commenced the 'horse,' (the equestrian statue)."

At last, on November 30, 1493, on the occasion of the marriage of Bianca Maria Sforza to the Emperor Maximilian, the model of the horse was exhibited to the public under a triumphal arch.[2]

Was this colossal horse modelled in clay, or, like certain earlier models, that, for instance, of Jacopo della Quercia's equestrian statue of

[1] Müller-Walde, *Jahrbuch der Kg. Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, p. 155.

This important document runs as follows: July 22, 1489. "Duke Lodovico intends to erect a noble memorial to his father; he has already charged Leonardo da Vinci to execute a model for it, that is to say, a great bronze horse upon which (will be placed) a figure of Duke Francesco in armour. And seeing that his Excellency was desirous of having something superlatively good, he charged me to write to you on his behalf, begging that you would send him an artist capable of carrying out such a work; for though he has entrusted it to Leonardo da Vinci, the Duke appears to me far from satisfied that he is equal to the task."

[2] The poets Taccone, Giovanni da Tolentino, Lanc. Curzio and a host of others sang the praises of Leonardo's masterpiece. For some of their effusions see *Il Castello di Milano*, by Beltrami (p. 180—182).

Giantedesco da Pietramala at Siena, of a mixture of wood, hay, hemp, clay and mortar? An early writer enables us to satisfy our curiosity on this question by informing us that the "typus" (model) was "cretaceus," that is, of chalk or plaster.[1]

This was the end of the first act of the drama; the second opened with the necessary preparations for the casting of the statue.[2] Strictly speaking, the sculptor might now have considered his part of the business completed; what remained to be done was chiefly mechanical. But the division of labour was not very clearly defined in the fifteenth century, and Leonardo was obliged to devote much time and patience to experiments in the founder's art. The construction of the furnaces and the moulds, the composition of the bronze, the manner of heating, the finishing of the cast, the polishing, the chasing—all this had to be carefully considered.



STUDIES OF HORSES.
(Windsor Library.)

The financial embarrassments of the court of Milan contributed quite as much as Leonardo's procrastinating tendencies to the delay in the completion of the "Cavallo." In a letter to Lodovico il Moro—

[1] *De Cardinalatu*, i. p. 50.—*Cf.* Müller-Walde, *Jahrbuch der kg. Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, p. 105—107.

[2] In his work *De Divina Proportione* (dedicated to Lodovico il Moro, February 9, 1498), Leonardo's friend Pacioli, tells us that the colossus was to measure twelve braccie (about twenty-six feet in height), and to weigh, when cast in bronze, about 200,000 lbs., while that designed by the brothers Mantegazza would not have weighed more than 6,000.

unfortunately without a date—the artist writes, "I say nothing of the horse (the equestrian statue) because I know the state of affairs—" (literally, the times : the difficulties of the present situation).

Leonardo himself was the first to feel a doubt as to the completion of the monument. In a letter to the wardens of a church at Piacenza, who, it seems, had asked his advice as to the choice of a bronze founder, he declares that he alone would be competent to carry out the work they propose, but that he is overburdened with orders. The artist's words are too characteristic not to be given textually : "Believe me, there is no man capable of it but Leonardo of Florence, who is engaged upon the bronze horse of the Duke Francesco ; and he is out of the question, for he has enough work for all the rest of his days, and I doubt, seeing how great that work is, if he will ever finish it."[1]



STUDIES OF HORSES.
(Windsor Library.)

An anonymous biographer confirms Vasari's statement that Leonardo intended casting the statue in one piece,[2] but this statement is confuted by one of Leonardo's own manuscripts, in which he discusses the possibilities of casting 100,000 lbs. of metal, and determines that five furnaces would have to be used, reckoning 2,000 (20,000) or at the most 3,000 (30,000) lbs. to each furnace.[3] This, of course, settles the question.

[1] Richter, vol. ii. p. 15,400.—Uzielli, 2nd ed. vol. i. p. 179.—Müller-Walde, *Jahrbuch der kg. Pr. Kunstsammlungen* 1897, p. 94 *et seq.*

[2] Milanesi—*Documenti inedite*, p. 11. Vasari says that on this point Leonardo consulted his skilled compatriot, Giuliano da San Gallo, when the latter visited Milan.

[3] Beltrami, *Il Codice di Leonardo da Vinci nella Biblioteca del Principe Trivulzio*, fol. 47.

Leonardo's masterpiece came to a miserable end. Sabba di Castiglione's story of the statue being knocked to pieces by the Gascon crossbowmen of Louis XII. has perhaps been taken too literally.[1]

That this ruthless destruction did not occur during Louis's first occupation of Milan in 1499, is evident from the fact that in 1501 the Duke of Ferrara was anxious to obtain possession of the model executed by Leonardo.[2] Still, we have no reason to doubt that foreign soldiers had a hand in this deplorable piece of vandalism, though there is probably much justice in M. Bonnaffé's presumption that "a statue of perishable material, of such dimensions and in such an attitude, exposed to all the vicissitudes of the weather, soon perishes when it once begins to deteriorate." Already much damaged in 1501, Leonardo's monument was inevitably doomed. Some drunken soldiers, perhaps, made a target of the half ruined colossus, and so completed its destruction; whether they were French, German, Spanish, Swiss or native Italians, is wholly immaterial.

The "Cavallo" has perished utterly; not even a drawing remains to give us an idea of what this work of genius must have been. It is my opinion, however, that we must seek elsewhere for traces of it. Is it likely that the bronze-casters, who were so busily employed during the early Renaissance in reproducing works of art, antique or contemporary, would have overlooked this marvel? They reproduced the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius again and again! Padua and Verona, the head-centres of the bronze-workers, even Venice, were not so far from Milan but that followers of Donatello, such as Vellano and Riccio, or of Verrocchio, such as Leopardi and the Lombardi, might have known the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza "de visu," or from terra-cotta copies. We know, indeed, that a small model of

[1] "So much is certain," says this writer in his Memoirs (published 1546), "that through the ignorance and carelessness of certain persons who neither recognise nor appreciate talent in any way, this work has been given over ignominiously to ruin. And I would remind you," he adds, "—not without sorrow and indignation—that this noble and ingenious masterpiece served the Gascon archers for a target." Vasari confirms this account by stating that the model remained intact till King Louis entered Milan with the French, who totally destroyed it.

[2] See the Correspondence published by the Marquis Campori: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1866, vol. i. p. 43. According to M. Boito, the archers destroyed the figure of the rider, but not the horse. (*Leonardo, Michelangelo, Andrea Palladio*, p. 99, Milan, 1883.)

Leonardo's "Cavallo" was brought into France by Rustici, and subsequently formed part of the collection of Leone Leoni.[1] Unfortunately every trace of it has vanished. Vasari speaks of a small wax model said to have been quite perfect, but, even in his day, this was no longer in existence.

In the Berlin Museum there is a bronze statuette of a horse (no. 224) which Messrs. Bode and v. Tschudi believe to be derived from Leonardo's masterpiece, basing their opinion chiefly on the vivacious treatment of the head, and the vigorous structure of the hind-quarters, on which all the weight is thrown. In Mme. Edouard André's collection too, there is a gilt-bronze statuette of a horse, bold, pliant, vivacious, and inspired as only the "Cavallo" of Leonardo can have been. The supreme quality of this little work of art, which Mme. André discovered in Venice, was evident to her critical eye, and she has not hesitated to give it Leonardo's glorious name. The infinite suppleness and freedom which Leonardo alone was capable of conferring on his creations, his skill in so arranging his sculptures that they looked equally beautiful from any point of view, his profound knowledge of proportion, are all present to a supreme degree in this bronze, which may be unhesitatingly ranked among the master's works.

Was Leonardo's horse represented as walking or galloping? This is a problem over which torrents of ink have flowed. Louis Courajod calls in the testimony of Paolo Giovio to prove that it was prancing ("vehementer incitatus et anhelans"), but may he not attach too strict a meaning to this? To my mind, the most forcible and, at the same time harmonious, composition is that with the rearing horse, in one sketch with uplifted head, in another with the head bent over the breast, It is by the aid of these two sketches that I prefer to evoke the image of Leonardo's masterpiece.

Some years after the destruction of the famous equestrian statue,

[1] "Un cavallo di relievo di plastica, fatto di sua mano, che ha il cavallier Leone Aretino statouario" (*Trattato della Pittura*, ed. of 1584, p. 177). See Courajod, *Alexandre Lenoir*, vol. ii. p. 95.—Plon, *Leone Leoni*, pp. 56, 63, 188. This author is inclined to think that this was the very model of which Leoni superintended the casting in Paris, 1549.

Michelangelo, meeting Leonardo in the streets of Florence, taunted him bitterly before a group of friends with having abandoned his work unfinished: "Thou who madest the model of a horse to cast it in bronze, and finding thyself unable to do so, wast forced with shame to give up the attempt."

Had Michelangelo known of the trials that awaited him in connection with his own work for the tomb of Pope Julius II., he would perhaps have been less severe upon an undertaking to which his rival might have applied his own phrase, calling it the tragedy of his life.



STUDY FOR THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF FRANCESCO SFORZA.
(Windsor Library. Reproduced from Dr. Richter's work.)

None the less, it is deeply to be deplored that Leonardo was not more energetic in his efforts to rescue the magnificent work which formed his chief title to renown as a sculptor. He must have had a strong strain of fatalism in him to witness the destruction of the masterpiece which had occupied the best years of his manhood without one word of regret. His note books overflow with records of every impression, even the most fleeting, but we may search in vain for a syllable concerning the demolition of his equestrian statue.

In it, not only the city of Milan, but all humanity lost a masterpiece, the beauty of which no description and no sketch can convey—a masterpiece worthy to be ranked with the *Last Supper* of Santa Maria delle Grazie.

Marshal Trivulzio, the rival of Lodovico il Moro, was also exceedingly desirous of having a memorial statue executed by Leonardo. It was thought, at one time, that the negotiations relative to the subject took place during Leonardo's residence in France, where he met the Marshal who, like himself, ended his days in that country.

But Dr. Richter, with more show of probability, suggests the date 1499, at which time Trivulzio returned in triumph to his native city, from which he had long been banished by Sforza. Some thought of defiance and of vengeance may have inspired him with the idea of erecting on his tomb a statue, less colossal in dimensions, but not less sumptuous, than that of Duke Francesco Sforza.

An elaborate project in Leonardo's own handwriting proves that the monument was to have been most ornate. The marble base, very richly worked, was to be flanked by columns with bronze capitals, and adorned with friezes, festoons, and pedestals, with six panels ("tavole") bearing figures and trophies (evidently in bas-relief, as on the tomb of Gaston de Foix), with six harpies bearing candelabra, and with eight figures (the Virtues?) at a price of 23 ducats each. The statue of the Marshal, valued at 150 ducats, was to crown the monument. The whole cost was fixed at 3046 ducats, 432 for the models in clay and in wax, 200 for the iron framework and the mould, 500 for the bronze, and 450 for the polishing and chasing. These figures are not without interest in their bearing upon the history of bronze sculpture at the end of the fifteenth century.[1]



STUDY FOR THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF FRANCESCO SFORZA.
(Windsor Library. Reproduced from Dr. Richter's work.)

The bronze statuette of a horseman in the Thiers collection may perhaps have had some connection with this design. A competent critic, M. Molinier, does not hesitate to recognise in it the portrait of Trivulzio; he is of opinion that the statuette originated in Leonardo's

[1] Richter, vol. ii., p. 15 *et seq.*

atelier, and is much inclined to believe that the master himself worked upon it.[1]

Leonardo deemed himself equally skilled in sculpture and in painting—"Seeing that I execute sculpture no less than painting, and that I practise the one in an equal degree with the other, it appears to me that I may, without reproach, pronounce an opinion as to which demands the more talent, skill and perfection."[2] Nevertheless, he showed himself relatively hard upon the former branch of art, which he systematically subordinated to the latter, always laying stress upon the fact that sculpture demands more physical than intellectual labour.

A whole series of sculptures of more than doubtful authenticity have been attributed to the master on the strength of these pronouncements.

According to a contemporary critic, the marble bust of Beatrice d'Este, in the Louvre, should be included in the list of Leonardo's works.[3] But it is now declared to be the work of Gian Cristoforo Romano.[4]

Another famous bust, the marvellous bas-relief of Scipio Africanus, bequeathed to the Louvre by M. Rattier, has also been ascribed to Leonardo, but on insufficient grounds.[5]

I have yet to mention the stucco bas-relief, *Discord*, in the South Kensington Museum, which M. Müller Walde has not hesitated to ascribe to Leonardo. The composition, it is true, is marked by all the fire, the spirit, and the inspiration so characteristic of the master. But the general arrangement seems to me too soft and facile. The predominance of the rich architectural background, again, an unprecedented feature in any authenticated work of Leonardo's, is not a reassuring detail. Note the colonnades, the domes, the arches, the galleries, the pseudo-classic palaces, etc. *Discord*, a spirited female figure, striding along, brandishes a long stick behind her, after the

[1] *Revue de l'Art ancien et moderne*, 1897, vol. ii., p. 421 *et seq.*, 1898, vol. i., p. 74. The horse has been restored by M. Frémiet. (See Charles Blanc, *Collection d'Objets d'Art de M. Thiers, léguée au Musée du Louvre*, Paris, 1884, p. 22.)

[2] *Trattato della Pittura*, chap. 38. Cf. chaps. 35, 36.

[3] Courajod, *Conjectures à propos d'un Buste en Marbre de Béatrix d'Este au Musée du Louvre*, Paris, 1877, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*.

[4] Venturi, *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1890.

[5] See the article in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, February, 1897.

V

Bust of Scipio. School of Leonardo.

(M. PAUL RAFFEL'S COLLECTION.)


P SCIPIONI

fashion of a Parthian dart. This figure recalls the types of the school of Fontainebleau, rather than those of Leonardo.

Strange to say, the composition, which contains passages of great freedom—a series of torsoes not unworthy of Michelangelo—abounds in faulty foreshortenings. All the figures in the foreground, running or seated, are very much too short.[1]

All the information we have as to other sculptures by Leonardo is more or less open to question.

Among the works ascribed to him are: *The Infant Jesus blessing the little S. John*, a terra-cotta, formerly the property of Cardinal Federigo Borromeo;[2] and a *S. Jerome*, in high relief, formerly in the Hugford collection at Florence.[3]

According to Rio,[4] Leonardo even worked in ivory! "M. Thiers," remarks this uncritical writer, "owns a little ivory figure of exquisite workmanship, which can hardly be attributed to any one but Leonardo." It is enough to reproduce such an assertion to show its inanity!

Needless to say, the sculpture of the School of Milan fell under Leonardo's ascendency no less evidently than the painting. Indeed, the principles of the creator of the equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza and of the *Last Supper*[5] were so suggestive that they extended their

[1] Dr. Bode ascribes the *Discord* to Verrocchio: *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1893, p. 77 *et seq.*

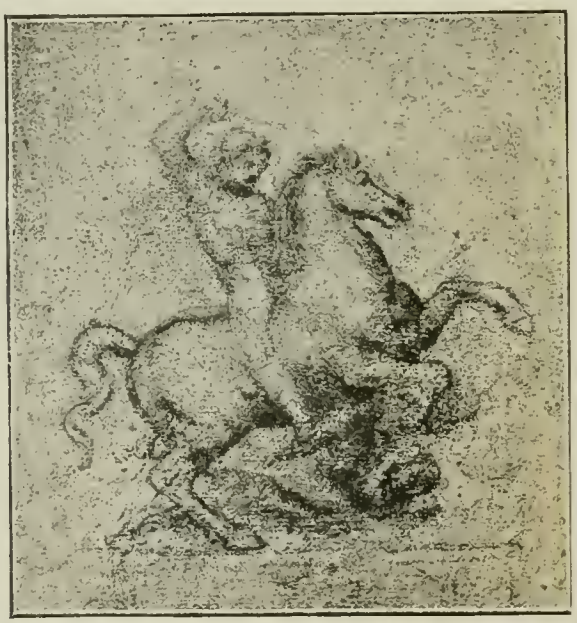
[2] Rio, *L'Art Chrétien*, vol. iii. p. 78.

[3] Venturi, *Essai sur les Ouvrages physica-mathématiques de Leonard de Vinci*, p. 46.

[4] *L'Art Chrétien*, p. 57.

[5] Copies without number, both in marble and bronze, prove how great must have been the sensation produced among the sculptors of Northern Italy by the *Last Supper*. First, we have the copy in bas-relief by Stefano da Sesto in the Certosa at Pavia, then two very similar copies in the church at Saronno and in S. Maria dei Miracoli at Venice (Frizzoni, *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1889). Another artist substituted silver for marble in a copy executed about the same time (Bossi, *del Cenacolo*, pp. 143, 165). In 1529, Andrea da Milano copied the picture in high relief, and replaced the painted figures by thirteen statues. Traces of the Leonardesque may be noted in the Virgin enthroned of Stefano da Sesto, also in the Certosa at Pavia (Lübke: *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, vol. vi. p. 44). The Apostles standing or kneeling at each side of the Virgin are reminiscent both of Leonardo and of Raphael. On another monument in the Certosa, the tomb of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, by Benedetto Briosco, there is a head of a Virgin which, with its perfect oval face and compressed mouth, at once recalls Leonardo. According to Vasari, Gugliemo della Porta is to be reckoned among the imitators of the master. Finally, we may note that in Tuscany Leonardo had the sculptor Rustici for a pupil, and honoured the young Bandinelli with his counsels.

vivifying influence even into regions apparently inaccessible to their action. It appears unexpectedly in artists like Bernardino Luini and Sodoma, who never had the good fortune to come into personal contact with Leonardo. But this influence did not manifest itself everywhere with identical, or equally beneficial, results. Though the Milanese sculptors recognised the supreme grace of Leonardo's creation and, to a certain extent, the difficulties that he had overcome, they had no conception of the infinite amount of detailed research and strenuous labour that went to make up the sum of his perfection. Hence it was that Milanese sculpture passed from extreme ruggedness to the facility, the polish, the sentimental insipidity so apparent in the statues and bas-reliefs of Briosco at the Certosa of Pavia, and those of Bambaja, on the famous tomb of Gaston de Foix.



STUDY FOR THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF FRANCESCO SFORZA.
(Windsor Library. Reproduced from Dr. Richter's work.)



STUDY OF HORSES.

(Windsor Library.)

CHAPTER VI

"THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS"—OTHER MADONNAS OF THE MILANESE PERIOD



A FIGURE FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."

(Bonnat Collection, Paris.)

THERE is no more tantalising problem in the history of modern art than that of the classification and chronology of Leonardo da Vinci's works. One is sometimes tempted to believe that just as the master's handwriting remained absolutely unchanged for thirty-five years, making it impossible to distinguish the manuscripts of his extreme old age from those of his first literary efforts,[1] so, too, his manner of drawing and painting never varied an iota throughout his career. I will not undertake to solve all the difficulties, many of them inextricable, which beset the determination of dates in a life-work of such importance as that of Leonardo. In such investigations it is impossible to show too much reserve, scepticism, and above all modesty, a virtue which is becoming extremely rare in the domain of artistic erudition. But I may claim to offer some materials for

[1] See M. Charles Ravaisson-Mollien's *Manuscrits de Léonard de Vinci*, vol. v. p. 1.

the building up of a monument which no isolated efforts can hope to raise.

Successive biographers of Leonardo have fixed the date of the *Virgin of the Rocks*, some before his removal from Florence,[1] some after his establishment at Milan ;[2] in other words, some before and some after the year 1484. A recently discovered document has settled this vexed question ;[3] the picture was painted at Milan.

Nevertheless, there is a vast gulf between the Louvre picture and other works painted by Leonardo at Milan ; technique, style, expression, all differ. The drawing is slightly dry and hard, somewhat in the manner of Verrocchio ; the crumpled draperies, the anxious, even fretful expression of the faces, are peculiarities (we dare not say faults, for such faults disarm criticism) which were soon to disappear in the master's more mature works. In a word, though it was painted at Milan, the *Virgin of the Rocks* is Florentine in feeling.

The picture, in spite of the impression of rapid and spontaneous creation it makes upon the spectator, was one of the most laborious of the master's works, as his drawings bear witness. A characteristic

[1] Charles Clément, Müller-Walde. I myself once shared this opinion.

[2] Lübke, *Geschichte der italienischen Malerei*, vol. ii.—A. Gruyer, *Voyage autour du Salon carré du Louvre*, p. 33. Paris, 1891. M. Gruyer believes the picture to have been painted at Milan, rather at the beginning than at the end of Leonardo's sojourn there. According to him, it dates from between 1482 and 1490, rather than from between 1490 and 1500.

[3] Motta, *Archivio storico lombardo*, 1893, vol. xx., p. 972–977.—Frizzoni, *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1894, p. 58–61. The following is an abstract of this curious document : At a date unspecified, between 1484 and 1494, Giovanni Ambrogio Preda and Leonardo da Vinci agreed with the Brothers of the Chapel of the Conception of the Church of San Francesco at Milan, to execute an altar-piece ("una ancona") for them, to consist of gilded figures in relief, an oil painting of the Virgin, and two other pictures, also in oil, large figures of angels. Difficulties arose in connection with the price : the two artists valued the work at 300 florins ; the friars, however, declined to give more than 25 florins for the Madonna, though several amateurs had offered 100. In the petition addressed to the Duke on the subject, the artists ask that the Madonna should be left in their hands, and that the 800 lire paid them by the friars should be considered the price of the reredos and the two angels.

It must not, however, be supposed that Preda was Leonardo's collaborator in the picture. They were associated in the execution of a carved reredos with three pictures. Preda clearly produced the sculptures ; he is, too, the reputed author of the two angels ; and Leonardo—as this document finally establishes—painted the *Madonna* with his own hand.

VI

First Idea for "The Virgin of the Rocks."

(DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE COLLECTION, CHATSWORTH.



drawing (p. 167) in the Ecole des Beaux Arts reveals the various transformations of a single figure, that of the angel. He appears first in profile, standing, his left foot on a step ; with one hand he holds his mantle, and with the other he points to some object unseen in the drawing, evidently to the little S. John. Lower down are studies in silver-point for the left arm, holding back the drapery, and for the right arm, which appears first with the hand extended, then with the hand closed, save for the first finger. This last is the action Leonardo finally adopted for the picture. I hasten to add that it is also the only part of the drawing he retained. In the picture the angel is no longer in profile, but turns his face three-quarters to the spectator, which adds greatly to the animation of the scene, for in a composition of four persons, two of whom are children, an actor in profile would be an actor more or less lost. The action of the left arm has undergone a modification no less important ; instead of holding the drapery, it supports the Divine Child, and the angel, who was standing, now kneels on one knee. It needed Leonardo's consummate art to mask so much effort, and preserve an appearance of freshness and spontaneity in a work which was the result of long and elaborate combinations.

There are other drawings, showing us Leonardo's dealings with the head, the figure, and the draperies of the angel. First in importance is the superb study of the head in the Royal Library at Turin, perhaps even more beautiful than the head in the picture itself. I may also mention a tracing of a lost original in the Ambrosiana at Milan, a head with long curling hair, turned three-quarters to the spectator (Gerli, pl. xxi. ; Braun, no. 27).

In the Windsor Library, again, we have a sketch for the figure of the angel (Grosvenor Gallery Catalogue, no. 71), another for the arm with the outstretched forefinger (no. 72), and a study of drapery for this same angel (no. 75), who looks towards the background instead of at the spectator.

A drawing in the Uffizi (Braun, 431), a study of drapery for a kneeling figure, seen in profile, is somewhat akin to the Windsor study, but was certainly designed for a different and older figure. (The shoulder and left arm are bare.)

Among the studies for the head of the Virgin, I may mention as most important a drawing on green paper in silver-point, in the Duke of Devonshire's collection at Chatsworth (see our pl. vi.). In this she is represented side by side with the little S. John, looking from left to right, in an exactly opposite direction to that of the picture. The type, over-slender and affected, is far from attractive, and differs altogether from that finally adopted. But that this head was a study for the *Virgin of the Rocks* is proved by the presence of the little S. John, reproduced almost exactly from the drawing in the Louvre.



STUDY FOR THE ANGEL IN THE "VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS."
(Royal Library, Turin.)

Having thus established the relation of the Chatsworth drawing to the *Virgin of the Rocks*, we are further enabled to connect a head of the Virgin in the Christ Church collection at Oxford (p. 171), with the picture. In type and technique this drawing is almost identical with that at Chatsworth.[1]

I may add that, differing altogether from Herr Müller-Walde (Fig. 8), I consider the head of a young woman on green paper, in the Uffizi, closely akin to the head of the Virgin in

[1] This connection has escaped Herr Müller-Walde, who assigns the date 1472–1473 to the Christ Church study. (Fig. 9, pl. xliii.) We must, in view of the demonstration in the text above, antedate it by some six or eight years. As to the laborious theory built up by Signor Morelli on the Christ Church drawing, which he ascribes to his favourite, Bernardino dei Conti, it is overthrown at once by the mere fact that this drawing was a study for the *Virgin of the Rocks*, and that in execution it shows an absolute identity with other drawings by Leonardo. It is not improbable that the head of a woman in the Borghese Gallery (Müller-Walde, Fig. 7) may also have been a study for the picture, if indeed this drawing is really by Leonardo.



STUDY FOR THE ANGEL IN THE "VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS."

(École des Beaux Arts, Paris.)

the picture. It has the same short but firmly modelled nose, the same straight lips, the same somewhat square chin.[1]

We may now briefly mention the studies for the Infant Jesus.

The Louvre owns three, in silver-point heightened with Chinese white, on that greenish paper Leonardo seems to have specially affected during his first Florentine period. They are all of the Child's head, and show it in profile; he looks before him, while, in the picture, he turns to look at his mother. Note, however, that whereas in the first the face is in sharp profile, in the other two the artist tries the effect of a "profil perdu" (i.e., less than a full profile). Dr. Richter (vol. i., p. 345) questions the authenticity of the principal drawing (no 383 in M. Reiset's catalogue), which he holds to be a copy of later date. But I am unable to share his views on this point. Herr Müller-Walde, on the other hand, describes the drawing as "herrlich" (superb).

A smaller, but more complete study of the same head, with the shoulders and part of the breast added, is in the Royal Library at Windsor (Richter, pl. xliv.). It is a very realistic drawing, the expression of the face curiously old and prescient. It is noticeable that it is in red chalk, a medium never used by Leonardo's predecessors, and infrequently by himself till a comparatively late period of his career. Nothing short of Richter's authority, therefore, would induce me to accept the authenticity of this study, the earliest in date of Leonardo's drawings in red chalk.

Another study for the Child, seated, and leaning on one hand, an angel's head beside him, was published by Gerli (pl. xix.).

Finally, a pencil drawing of a child's head, touched with Chinese white, in the Chatsworth collection, is also supposed to be a study for the picture.[2]

We may now pass on to the studies for the little S. John. A sketch for the head, three quarters to the front, is to be found in the Vallardi collection, in the Louvre (Braun, no. 170). It is drawn in silver-point, on greenish paper: (Richter, vol. i., 342). This head

[1] I only know the *grisaille* sketch for the head of the Virgin in the Holford collection by Rio's mention of it in *L'Art Chrétien* (vol. iii., p. 81).

[2] Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, vol. iii., p. 353.

served Raphael as his type for a whole series of Infant Saviours. The same head re-appears in a drawing in the Duke of Devonshire's collection, also on green paper, side by side with a head of the Virgin. (See our pl. vi.)

Two drawings in the Mancel gallery, in the Hôtel de Ville at Caen, to which my attention was drawn by M. Léopold Mabilleau, and for photographs of which I am indebted to the learned keeper of the gallery, M. Decauville-Lachenée, are studies for the little S. John and the Infant Jesus. A long interval, however, perhaps several years, seems to have divided these studies from the finished work. As his habit was, the artist, before sitting down to his easel, submitted his various figures to a laborious process of adaptation. Thus, he made the profile head considerably younger in the picture ; from a boy, the child became an infant. He also reduced the masses of hair to normal proportions, and softened the expression of the little S. John.

German critics, from Passavant and Waagen to Herr Müller-Walde, have contested the authenticity of the *Virgin of the Rocks* from time to time.[1]

Setting all patriotic considerations aside, I cannot but maintain the Louvre picture to be one of those in which the master's genius manifests itself most gloriously. Allowances must, of course, be made for the unhappily numerous repaints, and the blackening of the shadows, a defect aggravated by the thick yellow varnish that overlies the surface. Granted that the composition has not achieved the breadth and grandeur of the *Last Supper*, or the suavity of the *S. Anne*, yet it shows us Leonardo as his own precursor.

A replica of the *Virgin of the Rocks* was bought in 1880, at the considerable price of £9,000, for the English National Gallery, which claims in this example to have acquired the true original by Leonardo. The replica, which came from the Suffolk collection, was bought in

[1] Quite recently, M. Strzygowski pronounced the *Virgin of the Rocks*, in the Louvre, a bad copy! (*Jahrbuch der kgl. Kunstsammlungen*, 1895, p. 165.) See also Sir E. Poynter's article in the *Art Journal*, 1894, p. 229–232. But cf. Signor Frizzoni (*Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1884, vol. i., p. 235), Herr Koopmann (*Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 1891, p. 353–360), Dr. Richter (*Art Journal*, 1894, pp. 166–170, 300–301), and various other foreign critics, who all uphold the Louvre picture.



"THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS."

(National Gallery, London.)

Italy in 1796 by the collector, Gavin Hamilton, for 30 ducats. It is declared to be the picture described by Lomazzo as in the church of San Francesco at Milan at the end of the sixteenth century.[1] The two side pictures, single figures of angels, passed into the collection of the Duca Melzi. They have now (July, 1898) been acquired by the National Gallery, and have lately been placed on either side of the altar-piece, as works by Leonardo's fellow-labourer, Ambrogio de Predis.



STUDY FOR THE "VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS."

(Christ Church Library, Oxford.)

An absolutely decisive argument in favour of the authenticity of the Louvre picture is furnished by the fact that there are studies by Leonardo in the École des Beaux Arts and at Windsor (see pp. 165, 167), showing the angel's hand outstretched towards the Infant Jesus. As is well known, this gesture is modified in the London example, which must therefore be of later date than ours. In the first of these drawings, which has escaped the investigations of all my predecessors, the standing figure certainly seems to have been re-touched, perhaps even re-drawn in parts; but the two fragments of the arms and hands proclaim Leonardo's authorship with unmistakable precision. The handling is not yet devoid of archaism. Note that the angel's arm resembles that of S. Peter in the *Last Supper* at Milan; there is the same gesture, the same bending back of the hand.

[1] *Trattato della Pittura*, book ii., chap. xvii.

The London picture is, in my opinion, a replica, painted under Leonardo's supervision by one of his pupils.[1]

The Louvre picture, I freely admit, is hard of aspect, and harsh in tonality. Time has fastened his cruel teeth into it. The painting has lost its bloom, and the groundwork seems to lie bare before us. Nevertheless, it speaks to the eyes and the soul with supreme authority.

We must further remember that the Louvre picture has a venerable history. It has been on the spot for hundreds of years. In the first part of the sixteenth century, it was already in the collection of Francis I., a sovereign, who, it must be admitted, was very favourably circumstanced as regards the acquisition of works by Leonardo.[2]

One word more. The differences between the London and Paris examples are of precisely the same nature as those of the two examples of Holbein's *Madonna*, that in the Dresden Gallery, and that in the Darmstadt Museum. The first, which is the original, is more archaic, heavier perhaps, but more deeply felt; the second, the copy, is freer and more elegant.

If, as I suppose, the National Gallery picture was painted in Leonardo's studio and under his supervision, it is easy to see why certain harshnesses apparent in the Louvre example, have disappeared in that of the National Gallery. The master was seeking, hesitating; the pupil had only to copy and to soften.

It is time to study the composition of the *Virgin of the Rocks*.

It is a group of four figures, three kneeling, the fourth seated at

[1] I entirely endorse M. Anatole Gruyer's judgment on this head: "The London picture is fresh in colour, well preserved, fascinating, graceful, full of charm; but it is a superficial charm. The faces are slightly insipid in their beauty; there is something heavy and woolly in their contours; they lack the intensity of expression so characteristic of Leonardo. The angel is not wanting in grace, but the grace has little elevation. This figure differs to some extent from that in the Louvre picture. Supporting the Infant Jesus with both hands, he looks at the little S. John, unheeding of the spectator. The Virgin and the two "bambini" are distinctly feebler. In short, it is a pretty, rather than a beautiful work, and one in which we do not feel the real presence of the master. (*Voyage autour du Salon carré*, p. 31.)

[2] Testimony of Cassiano del Pozzo, published in the *Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris*, 1886.—Père Dan, in his *Trésor des Merveilles de la Maison royale de Fontainebleau*, p. 135, mentions "Our Lady, with an Infant Jesus supported by an angel, in a very graceful landscape."

VII

"The Virgin of the Rocks."

(LEONARDO.)



the entrance of a cavern. These figures are arranged in the pyramidal form afterwards so much in favour with Raphael. The Virgin, in the centre, but in the middle distance, dominates the other actors. A blue mantle fastened at the breast by a brooch, hangs from her shoulders. One hand on the shoulder of the little S. John, at whom she is looking, the other extended over her Son, she invites the precursor to approach him. The Infant, seated on the ground, and steadying himself with his left hand, blesses his young companion with the right ; the angel, one knee on the ground beside the Child, supports him with one hand, and with the other shows him the little S. John. Here we have already the germs of the consummate art of gesture, of which Leonardo afterwards made so brilliant an application in the *Last Supper* at Milan. It is this which gives such extraordinary animation to the composition.

The master, however, is far from perfect as yet. A certain inexperience reveals itself, side by side with the most exquisite sensibility, the rarest faculty for observation. There is, in particular, something slightly archaic in the Virgin's type. (The painter seems to have lagged behind the draughtsman, for the studies for this picture are free and supple in the highest degree.) The nose is straight, not aquiline, the mouth but slightly curved, the chin low and square, as in certain faces of Perugino's and Francia's. As to the angel, who wears a red tunic and a green mantle, his expression is vague and undecided. He is more firmly modelled in the two preliminary drawings, the one in the Royal Library at Turin, the other in the École des Beaux Arts. Note the affinity between his type and that of the Virgin.

In the two children there is also something hard and arid ; the desire for objective truth occasionally gets the better of a sense of style and expression. But what a knowledge of colour and of modelling! The result is a mingling of Correggio and Rembrandt. In the Infant Jesus, with his somewhat mournful expression, his chestnut locks, his chubby contours (there are dimples on the elbow and shoulder), the effect of the wonderful foreshortening, the broadly treated surfaces, is little short of miraculous. In the little S. John, the foreshortening is curt and abrupt, after the manner of Verrocchio. The type, too, has striking analogies with those of Verrochio. I may add that the light

falls full on the Infant Saviour, whereas his young companion is in shadow.

It is not easy to sum up the beauties of such a work. First of all, I must point out the profound originality of the conception, and the infinite charm of the execution. Like a balloon soaring in the air to such a height that presently all but a few points on the earth are out of sight, it rises above all anterior and contemporary works! Once more an artist has arisen, who, casting off the trammels of tradition, looks at things face to face, and renders them as he sees them, with sovereign grace and distinction. Before Raphael, Leonardo treats the little intimate drama: the Virgin caressing her son, watching his play, directing his education—and treats it with as much charm, if not with quite the same precision of touch. The playfulness, the lightness, and at the same time, the conviction with which he endows these scenes of two or three actors, are not to be rendered in words. They are idyls of the freshest and most innocent kind, without that note of melancholy which the prescience of pain to come often puts in the eyes and on the lips of the young mother.



STUDY FOR THE INFANT S. JOHN THE BAPTIST.
(Mancel Gallery, Caen.)

The composition is curiously modern. How much of freedom there is, even in the faces! The artist, unfettered by traditional portraits, takes as model for the Virgin, Christ, the Apostles and Saints, the men and women around him. He troubles himself little about attributes, preserving or suppressing them according to the exigencies of his scheme. He goes so far as to represent the Virgin with bare feet, a heresy into which Fra Angelico, nourished in the severe tradition of

the Dominicans, would never have fallen, a heresy which orthodox painters abjured once more after the Council of Trent. But if Leonardo, like the majority of his Florentine contemporaries, brought his divinities down to earth, he gave a warmth and poetry to his conceptions, well calculated to awaken religious fervour, and no painter, indeed, has passed for a more devout artist. Strange paradox! Leonardo and Perugino, the two artists Vasari charges with absolute scepticism, are just the two whose works breathe most eloquently of faith!

Leaving warmth and intensity of harmony to his fellow-student, Perugino, with his deep and brilliant greens and reds, his precise contours, his firm, and often hard modelling, Leonardo, in his *Virgin of the Rocks*, as in all his later works, determined to win colour from shades apparently the most neutral, greens verging on grays, with silvery reflections, bitumen, dull yellow. Nothing could be more strongly opposed to the scale adopted by the Primitives. All high, frank tones are banished from his palette; he renounces gold, rich stuffs, and brilliant carnations. It was indeed, with a sort of *camaïeu* that he achieved his marvels of chiaroscuro, and the incomparable warm and amber harmony of his *Mona Lisa*. No artist before him had made so severe a demand on the possibilities of pure painting.



STUDY FOR THE INFANT JESUS.
(Mancel Gallery, Caen.)

The ease of the composition and the richness of the handling claim our admiration in an equal degree. The Florentines, those incomparable draughtsmen, might justly have exclaimed: "At last a painter is born to us!" The angles and articulations of the figures

have disappeared, giving place to the most harmonious lines ; these, in their turn are bathed in light of infinite suavity, or rather, the figures themselves are conceived with a view to the light which bathes them. This art of wrapping objects in atmosphere, of *enveloppe*, to use a modern phrase, was, in fact, if not invented by Leonardo, at least first brought by him to that high degree of perfection to which it now attains. In his effects of chiaroscuro, in the unprecedented subtleties of his colour-harmonies, we recognise the born painter. Leonardo was as well versed in the laws of linear perspective, anatomy, and kindred sciences as any of his rivals. But far from looking upon them as an end in themselves, he treats them as accessories, a mechanism, to be concealed as soon as it has played its part. A picture, according to his idea, should betray no effort ; it must only show the result—the ideal of grace, beauty, or harmony in full perfection.

The landscape of the *Virgin of the Rocks* calls for special analysis.

From the first, Leonardo manifests a love for rocky and broken landscape, in preference to scenery of broad lines and undulations. The Italian painting of the Renaissance hovered, so to speak, between these two tendencies. The one was followed by the "trecentisti," whose successor Leonardo was on this point ; the other by Perugino, and to some extent, by the Venetians. The partisans of the first system affect marked contrasts ; rugged boulders, alternating with smiling vegetation ; scenery tunnelled by ravines, and ravaged by convulsions, as in some parts of the Apennines. They are one with the Flemings in their love of detail. The others incline to large surfaces ; their hills descend to plains and lakes by gradual undulations. Their landscape, in short, is the Roman Campagna, rendered with masterly effect by Perugino and the Umbrian school.

Leonardo, however, loves to complicate and refine upon the traditional material. The gorges of Chiusuri and of Monte Oliveto do not suffice him. He is not even content with the erratic boulders of the monastery of La Vernia, in the Casentino. The mineralogist and geologist dominate the artist. He is fascinated by the strange and monstrous dolomite rocks of the Friuli, gigantic cones emerging from vast table-lands, jagged peaks, grottoes no less imposing than the dolmens and menhirs of Brittany.

7

Study for the Head of the Infant Jesus in "The Virgin of the Rocks."

(DE VOGEL.)



Printed by Draeger, Paris

The soil is treated with all the tenderness the Primitives bestowed on accessories. Mantegna could not have been more exact, but Leonardo adds fancy to exactitude. Slabs of rocks, pebbles, plants (irises), make up the foreground. The grotto seems to breathe forth a strange and penetrating moisture : we dream of nymphs, of sylphs, of gnomes, of all that world of fantasy evoked by Shakespeare in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, a world only Leonardo could have translated on canvas. The background is composed of a series of perpendicular rocks, like sugar-loaves.

Leonardo, spirit of hesitations and experiments though he was, shows a rare tenacity in his choice of landscape motives. Throughout his works, in the *Virgin of the Rocks*, the *S. Anne*, the *Mona Lisa*, we find the same dolomite mountains, abrupt peaks rising from high plains in bizarre outline.[1] He very probably made a journey in his youth through the Friuli, and retained a vivid recollection of its scenery.[2]

I think it not impossible that the famous *Madonna Litta* bought at Milan for the Hermitage, S. Petersburg, in 1865, may also have been painted at this period.

The fact that the beautiful study in profile for the Virgin's head, in the Vallardi collection at the Louvre (see our pl. xi.), is on greenish paper of the same sort as that used for the studies of the *Virgin of the Rocks* tends to prove that the *Madonna Litta* is a more or less contemporary work.

This drawing contains the master's first idea. A pen drawing in the Windsor Library shows the Child at the mother's breast, in an attitude differing little from that of the picture.

In the picture, we see the Virgin seated, a half-length figure, in a room the two windows of which open on an arid landscape. Dressed in a red robe bordered with gold embroidery, and a blue mantle lined with yellow, she wears on her head a grayish scarf striped with black and enriched with gold ornaments, not unlike those worn by Raphael's

[1] In his drawings, too, there are many of these sugar-loaf rocks. See Richter, vol. ii., pl. cxvii.–viii. A picture in the Berlin Museum attributed to Verrocchio, *The Meeting of the youthful Saviour and S. John Baptist*, contains dolomite rocks like those of Leonardo's backgrounds.

[2] In one of his notes relating to the canal of Romorontino, he speaks of sluices established in the Friuli by his orders. (Richter, vol. ii., p. 253.)

Aldobrandini Madonna and his *Madonna della Sedia*. She gazes tenderly at the Babe, offering him her right breast. The Child looks towards the spectator; he lays one hand on his mother's breast, and grasps a goldfinch in the other. The conception is singularly sincere and touching.



STUDY FOR THE INFANT S. JOHN THE BAPTIST.
(The Louvre.)

Criticism has wavered considerably in its ascriptions of the *Madonna Litta*. It has been very generally accepted as a copy of an original by Leonardo. Clement de Ris attributed it to Luini,[1] whereas Signor Morelli claimed it for the inevitable Bernardino dei Conti,[2] and Herr Harck for the no less inevitable Ambrogio de Predis (*Repertorium*, 1896, p. 422). I will only say that it approaches very closely to the master himself.

[1] *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1879, vol. i., p. 343.

[2] This attribution was demolished by M. Somoff in the last edition (1891) of the Catalogue of Pictures in the Hermitage.

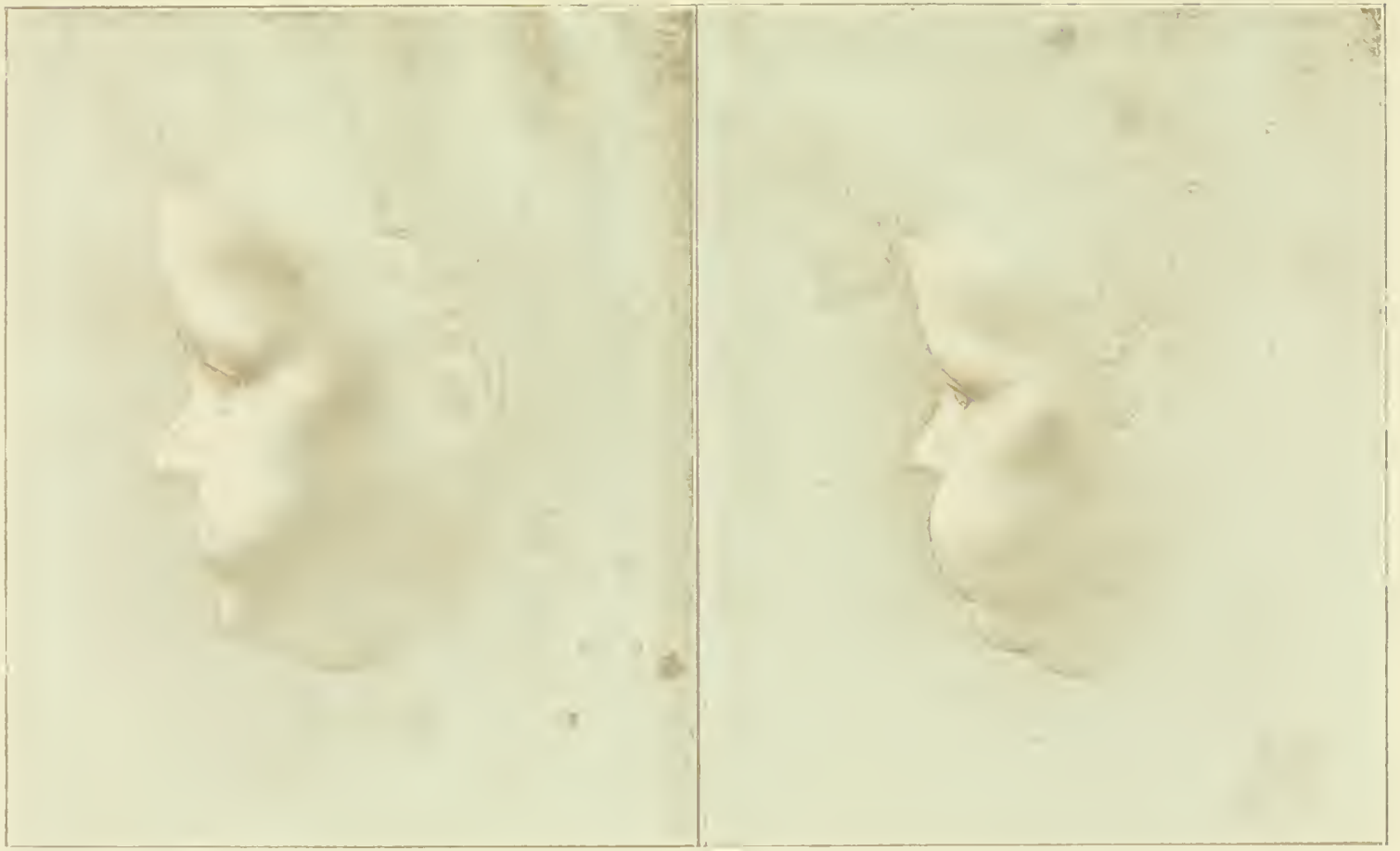


CHILD PLAYING WITH A CAT.
(Windsor Library.)

8

Studies for the Head of the Infant Jesus in "The Virgin of the Rocks."

(THE LOUVRE.)



Printed by Draeger Frères.



FIRST IDEA FOR "THE LAST SUPPER.

(Windsor Library.)

CHAPTER VII

"THE LAST SUPPER"



FIRST IDEA FOR "THE LAST SUPPER."

(The Louvre.)

IN the present chapter I propose to show how the painter of the *Mona Lisa*, the *Virgin of the Rocks*, and the *Saint Anne* developed, by what teachings of his predecessors he profited, through what intimate vicissitudes his ideas passed before culminating in the immortal page of Santa Maria delle Grazie. For in this, needless to say, we have no abstract and artificial work, born of the caprice of an artist's imagination, but a page from the book of life itself, a story that has been seen and felt, a drama that has been acted. I devote myself to the "processus," congratulating myself on the fact that my predecessors have confined themselves to the collection of materials, and that I have the pleasure of offering my readers an attempt at a co-ordination of these materials, which, whatever its merit, will at least be novel.

Before entering on this analysis I would say a few words as to the originality of the great picture, and its destination.

The word "Cenacolo" has a certain breadth of application in Italian. It is used indifferently for a dining-hall or refectory, for the special "upper room," in which the Saviour ate the Last Supper with his disciples, and for a picture representing that holy rite. The church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, that masterpiece of Lombard architecture as developed under the impulse given it by Bramante, was founded by the Dominicans, who began to build it in 1464, on Gothic lines. The work advanced slowly, and was carried on parsimoniously, until Lodovico il Moro, who took a fancy to the building, gave orders for the reconstruction of the cupola and the apse, causing the foundation stone to be laid in 1492. But it was after the death of Beatrice d'Este that the Milanese prince lavished gifts on his favourite church with special profusion, for it was here he buried his wife and children. Not content with pushing on the work vigorously, he filled the sacristy with plate and costly draperies.

The history of *The Last Supper* in Santa Maria delle Grazie is buried in obscurity. We know not when the masterpiece was begun, when it was finished, nor (in my opinion, the main point of the whole problem) what were the conditions which gave it birth. Let me say at once, and thus make it unnecessary to come back to this question of chronology, that Leonardo was at work upon it in 1497, and that he finished it in that year.[1]

The refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie forms a very long and fairly high rectangle, vaulted by means of demi-vaults, of which the pendentives sink into the vertical walls, and give rise, at each end of the room, to three demi-lunes. Square-headed windows, seven on the left, four on the right, in the upper part of the wall, give a sufficient light. The room is damp, and shamefully neglected; a layer of bricks does duty for flooring; the dirty green plaster that replaces the marble inlays and tapestries on the walls has scaled off in many places. The visitor

[1] Early in June, 1497, Lodovico wrote to one of his agents, telling him to urge Leonardo the Florentine to finish his work for the refectory of Santa Maria, and then to take the decoration of the opposite wall in hand. It would be well, added the Prince, to refer with him to the articles he signed, by which he engaged to finish it within a term specified by himself. (*Archivio storico lombardo*, 1874, p. 484.)—Cf. Müller-Walde, *Jahrbuch der kg. Kunstsammlungen*, 1898, p. 114–115.—Leonardo's friend, Luca Pacioli, speaks of the *Last Supper* as completely finished in his *Divina Proportione*, concluded in December, 1497.

finds himself suddenly before the masterpiece of Leonardo and of modern painting, without any of that preparation the mind receives by approaching a work of art set in fit surroundings. The composition is painted on the end wall; it fills the entire width, and is thus naturally enframed at either end by the return of the wall, and above, by the two little vaults.

Leonardo, as I have already said, disliked working in fresco. It is a process demanding a decision and rapidity utterly opposed to his methods. He accordingly used oil-colour, which, in addition to its other merits, had the charm of novelty to recommend it.

Before examining his work in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, we must pass in review the *Last Suppers* by which it had been preceded. For terms of comparison I may take those by Giotto, Andrea del Castagno, Ghirlandajo, and the unknown painter of the monastery of Sant' Onofrio at Florence.

As Burckhardt has well observed, representations of this sacred feast include two distinct motives, the institution of the Eucharist, and the solemn declaration made by Christ to his apostles: "Unus vestrum" one of you shall betray me.

In Giotto's *Last Supper*, in the Arena Chapel at Padua, the disciples are placed all round the table, an arrangement which practically suppresses three of the number, their backs being turned to the spectator. By an arrangement no less curious—I refrain from applying the word comic, even to the oversight of such a master as Giotto—the haloes of these three are placed, not behind their heads, but in front of their faces, making it impossible for them to see what was happening before them. Action—of which Giotto was generally so lavish—there is none; not a gesture, not a movement; the disciples look inquiringly at one another. That is the whole drama, a very negative one, as we see. A fresco of the school of Giotto, in the cloister of Santa Croce at Florence, shows greater skill in the arrangement, and more animation. We note certain reminiscences of the *triclinia* of the ancients, and one very touching motive, the beloved disciple leaning his head on Jesus' breast—("discipulus recumbens in sinu Jesu;" S. John xiii, 23).

A work that comes much nearer to Leonardo's masterpiece, and

is, in fact, its true prototype in many respects, is the *Last Supper* painted by the harsh and gloomy Andrea del Castagno in the refectory of the convent of Sant' Apollonia at Florence. The figures are placed in a setting of severe architecture inlaid with marbles; a monumental bench or seat surrounds the table. The personages gain greatly in vigour and in dignity by this arrangement of the background. In the centre, Christ raises his hand in benediction; beside him is the beloved disciple in the traditional attitude, his head leaning on the table; opposite is Judas, startled and trembling. One of the



LODOVICO IL MORO GRANTING A CHARTER TO THE PRIOR OF SANTA MARIA DELLE GRAZIE.

Miniature from the collection of the Marquis of Adda at Milan.)

other disciples—the prototype of the third apostle from the end on the right in Leonardo's painting—opens his hands, as if in amazement, while one of his neighbours clenches his; a third drops his head on his hand, as if bowed down by the fatal discovery; others whisper their suspicions to one another, or ponder over the matter in silence. The action is of the liveliest; it abounds in life-like traits, and bears witness to rare faculties of observation. The figures themselves are grave, austere, almost grandiose. It is the composition which is the weak spot in this important work, a work that was undoubtedly known to Leonardo, for he imitated it. Andrea has isolated the actors, in-



THE CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA DELLE GRAZIE AT MILAN.

stead of welding them together in harmonious groups ; and has thus sacrificed both variety of line and richness of combination. In spite of this, his fresco, a work too little known, is the one that comes nearest to Leonardo's masterpiece.

With Domenico Ghirlandajo's fresco, in the convent of San Marco at Florence, we return to the vagaries of the Primitives. The grouping is faulty to a degree. The apostles at the end of the table are huddled together, those near Jesus are too far apart ; the stooping figure of S. John leaves an unpleasant void in the composition, which Judas, who is placed opposite, on the outside of the table, fills but imperfectly. The general lack of animation and unity aggravates this initial fault ; the majority of the apostles know not what to think, still less what to say. One clasps his hands and raises his eyes to heaven ; another throws back the folds of his toga with an unmeaning gesture ; not one among them shows any vigour, not to say eloquence. Ghirlandajo, indeed, seems to have depicted the institution of the Eucharist ("Dispono vobis sicut") rather than the revelation of Judas' treachery.

A *Last Supper* contemporary with Leonardo's adorns the refectory of the monastery of Sant' Onofrio at Florence. Certain accomplished critics, M. Vitet among the number, have attributed it to Raphael, but on insufficient grounds. It is a timid work, and but for the youthful grace of expression in some of the heads, one might describe it as childish, so naïvely does the painter's inexperience betray itself in the dramatic conception of the subject. The beloved apostle, his head on the table, appears to be sleeping ; thus one actor disappears ; another pours himself out some wine ; the rest look calmly in front of them. As to Judas, he is placed, as usual, on the near side of the table, opposite to Jesus. We look in vain for men who show traces of astonishment, indignation, or grief ; all we see are personages—and even this is almost too emphatic a term for them—without elevation and without character. I pass over the other faults of the composition, the absence of grouping, the distraction caused by the portrayal of the subordinate incident in the background—Christ on the Mount of Olives—the introduction of movable discs, detaching themselves in the most puerile fashion on the chancel enframing the principal

VIII

"The Last Supper."

(REFECTORY OF SANTA MARIA DELLE GRAZIE, MILAN.



picture. In short, it is only too evident that we need not seek either prototype or pendant for the miracle of Santa Maria delle Grazie in this feeble work.

In his religious compositions, Leonardo, it must be admitted, was given to straying a little from his theme. The *Virgin of the Rocks*, the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *John the Baptist*, astonish and charm us beyond measure; but they hardly tend to edify us in the same degree. In his *Last Supper*, on the other hand, the master attacked the problem from the front, without circumlocution or subterfuge, determined to restrict himself to the gospel story, and to look to the subject itself for all it could offer. Hence it is that the painting in Santa Maria delle Grazie may be classed with Raphael's cartoons, as a work breathing forth the purest evangelic spirit, a work before which believers of every creed love to meditate, and in admiration of which they find a stimulus to faith.

No picture was ever lingered over more lovingly. It had matured in the artist's mind long before his hand began to translate the image engraven on his brain. Leonardo thought of it day and night; he rigorously applied this maxim of the *Trattato della Pittura* (cap. xvii.): "It is useful to go over in one's mind at night the things one has studied. I have also found it very useful," he adds, "when in bed, in the silence of the night, to recall the ideas of things one has studied and drawn, to retrace the contours of the figures that demand most reflection and application. By this means, the images of objects become more vivid, the impression they have made is fortified, and rendered more permanent." So great was his power of evocation, that when absent from his work, he suddenly saw the features, the characteristics required for such and such figures. Eager to fix the image that was in his mind, he would run in haste to the refectory to make the necessary corrections, and then return to his business or his walk. The anecdote told in this connection by Matteo Bandello, the skilful bishop-diplomatist, and licentious author of the *Novelle*, is very instructive: "In the time of Lodovico Sforza Visconti, Duke of Milan, certain gentlemen, visiting Santa Maria delle Grazie, the monastery of the Dominican friars, stood motionless in contemplation before the marvellous and celebrated *Last Supper*, on which the excellent

Florentine painter, Leonardo da Vinci, was then working. The artist took pleasure in hearing each one freely express his opinion of the work. It was his habit, as I myself was witness on several occasions, to mount the scaffolding before it (for the painting is at some considerable height above the ground) and to remain, brush in hand, from sunrise to sunset, forgetting to eat and drink, and painting without intermission. Sometimes, after this, he would be three or four days together without touching it, and yet he would stay before



"THE LAST SUPPER," BY ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO.

(Convent of S. Apollonia at Florence)

it an hour or two every day, contemplating it, considering and examining the figures he had created. I have also seen him, following the dictates of fancy or of eccentricity, start off at midday, when the sun was in the sign of the Lion, from the Corte Vecchia, where he was modelling his marvellous equestrian statue, and go straight to the monastery, where, mounting the scaffold, he would seize his brush, give a touch or two to one of the figures, and then depart and go elsewhere."[1]

[1] Leonardo seems to draw upon his own experience in a passage of the *Trattato della Pittura* (cap. lvi.) in which he says: "Do not act after the manner of some painters, who, finding their imagination fatigued, leave their work, and take exercise by walking; they carry away with them a weariness of mind that prevents them from seeing or hearing the friends and relatives they meet." . . . Is there not a striking analogy between this passage and Bandello's anecdote?

"Cardinal de Gurck was lodged at the Monastery delle Grazie at the time;[1] he entered the refectory at the moment when the gentlemen in question were assembled before the painting. As soon as Leonardo perceived him, he came down to pay his respects to him, and the prelate received him graciously, and loaded him with praise. Many subjects were discussed, notably the excellence of the painting; several of those present expressed regret that none of the ancient pictures so highly extolled by classic writers had survived, that we might decide



FIRST IDEA FOR "THE LAST SUPPER."
(Accademia, Venice.)

whether the masters of our time were equal to those of antiquity. The cardinal asked the painter what salary the Duke gave him. Leonardo replied that his regular pay was 2,000 ducats, apart from the gifts and presents the Duke continually lavished on him with the greatest munificence. The cardinal said it was a great deal. After he had quitted the refectory, Leonardo began to tell the assembled gentlemen a pretty story, showing how great painters have been honoured in all ages, and I, being present during his discourse, made a note of it in

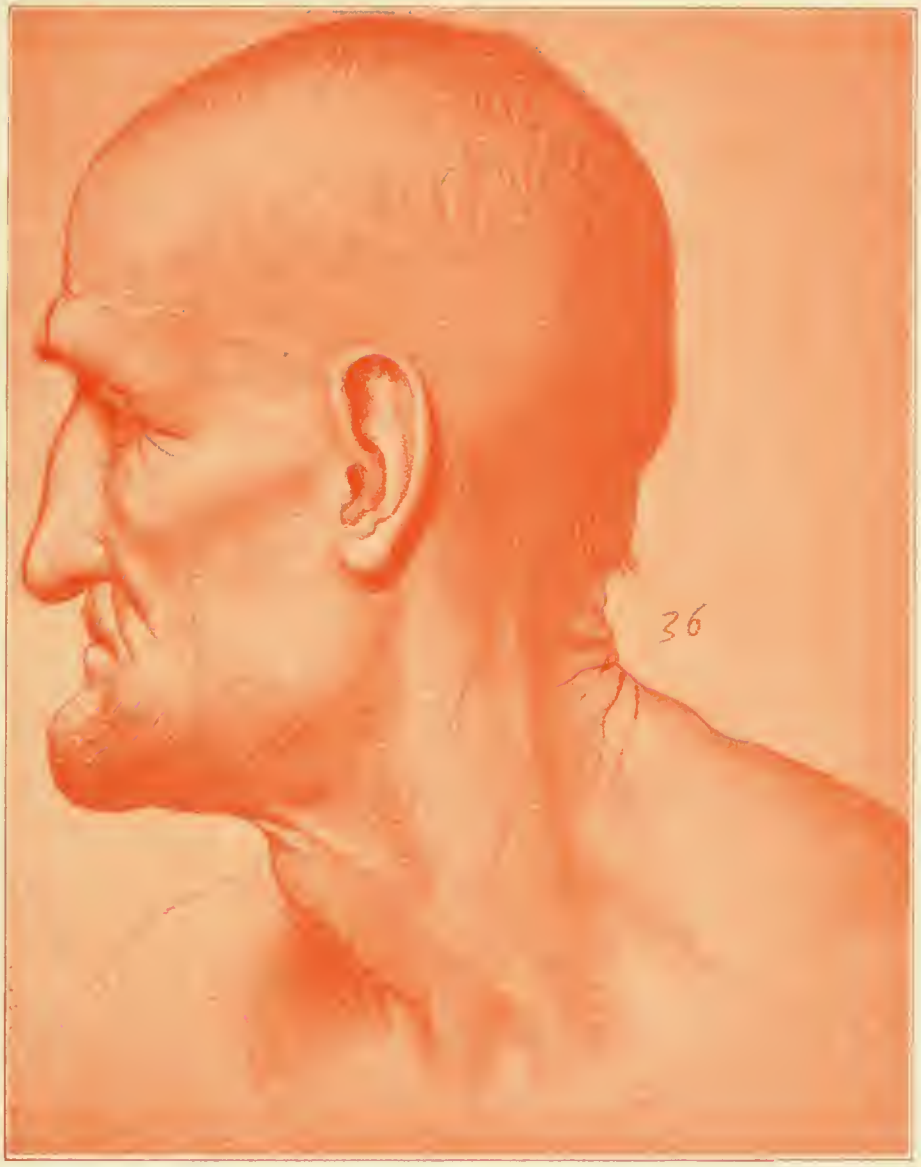
[1] Cardinal de Gurck visited Milan in January, 1497, and lodged at the monastery. Signor Uzielli infers that the *Last Supper* was finished by then. (*Leonardo da Vinci e tre Gentildonne milanesi del Secolo xv.*, p. 5.)

my memory, and had it present in my mind when I began to write my *Novelle*."

Tradition says the Prior tormented Leonardo unceasingly to get the painting finished promptly. "This simple person could in no way comprehend," says Vasari, "wherefore the artist should sometimes remain half a day together absorbed in thought before his work, without making any progress that he could see ; he would have had him work away as did the men who were digging in his garden, never laying the brush aside. Nay, more ; he went and complained to the Duke, and with such importunity, that the latter was at length compelled to send for Leonardo. Lodovico very adroitly exhorted Leonardo to finish the work, taking care to let it be seen that he had only acted on the solicitations of the Prior. Leonardo, knowing the prince to be intelligent and judicious, discoursed with him at some length on the matter, talking of art, and making him understand that men of genius are sometimes producing most when they seem to be labouring least, their minds being occupied in invention, and in the formation of those perfect conceptions to which they afterwards give form and expression with the hand. He added that he still had two heads to execute : that of Christ, which he could not hope to find on earth, and yet had not attained the power of presenting to himself in imagination, with that perfection of beauty and of celestial grace proper to the Godhead incarnate ; and that of Judas, which also gave him much anxiety, since he could not imagine a form by which to render the countenance of a man, who, after so many benefits received, had a heart so base as to be capable of betraying his Lord, and the Creator of the world. With regard to the second, however, he would continue to make search ; and, after all, if he could find no better, he might always make use of the head of that indiscreet and importunate Prior. This last touch made the Duke laugh heartily ; he declared Leonardo to be completely in the right ; and the poor Prior, utterly confounded, henceforth occupied himself in overlooking the workers in his garden, and left Leonardo in peace." We know, however, that Lodovico was at last obliged himself to press the over-fastidious artist. On June 30, 1497, he ordered one of his agents "to beg Leonardo the Florentine to finish his work in the refectory of Santa Maria

Study for the Head of an Apostle.

(WINDSOR LIBRARY).



Printed by Draeger. Paris.

delle Grazie." "The master finished the Virgin (this is a slip of Vasari's, for there is no Virgin in the *Last Supper*) and Judas, a perfect type of treachery and cruelty. As to the head of Christ, he left it unfinished.

Another sixteenth century writer, the Milanese Lomazzo, has completed Vasari's story by explaining why Leonardo left the head of the principal figure unfinished. After endowing the two saints, James the Greater and the Less, with the beauty we still admire, even in the ruin to which the *Cenacolo* is reduced, Leonardo, despairing of rendering the head of Christ in accordance with his ideal, took counsel with his old friend Zenale, who made this memorable speech to him: "Leonardo, the fault thou hast committed is one of which God only can absolve thee. It is of a truth impossible to conceive of faces more lovely and gentle than those of S. James the Greater and S. James the Less. Accept thy misfortune, therefore, and leave thy Christ imperfect as he is, for otherwise, when compared with the apostles, he would not be their Saviour or their Master." Leonardo took his advice, and this is why the head of Christ was left a mere sketch. [1]

The drawings for the *Last Supper* are few in number, and yet its process of evolution, as everything tends to show, was laborious in the extreme. I will mention one study only for the general arrangement, a sketch in the Louvre, which shows us four persons seated at table; one seems to be accusing another, with outstretched finger; the accused meets the accuser's gaze steadily; the two others listen unflinchingly; a fifth mounts on the table as if to protest.

In a drawing in red chalk in the Accademia at Venice, a mediocre, yet perfectly genuine work, the composition is more vivacious and less rhythmical than in the painting. Judas is seated at the outer side of the table; the beloved disciple rests his head on the cloth, making a vacuum in the grouping, the others gesticulate and declaim. The apostle last but one on the right is the only one to undergo little, if any modification. As to the Saviour himself, his face and attitude are alike

[1] Does not this incident recall the story of Timanthes, who, despairing of rendering the grief of Agamemnon at the sacrifice of Iphigenia, veiled his face?

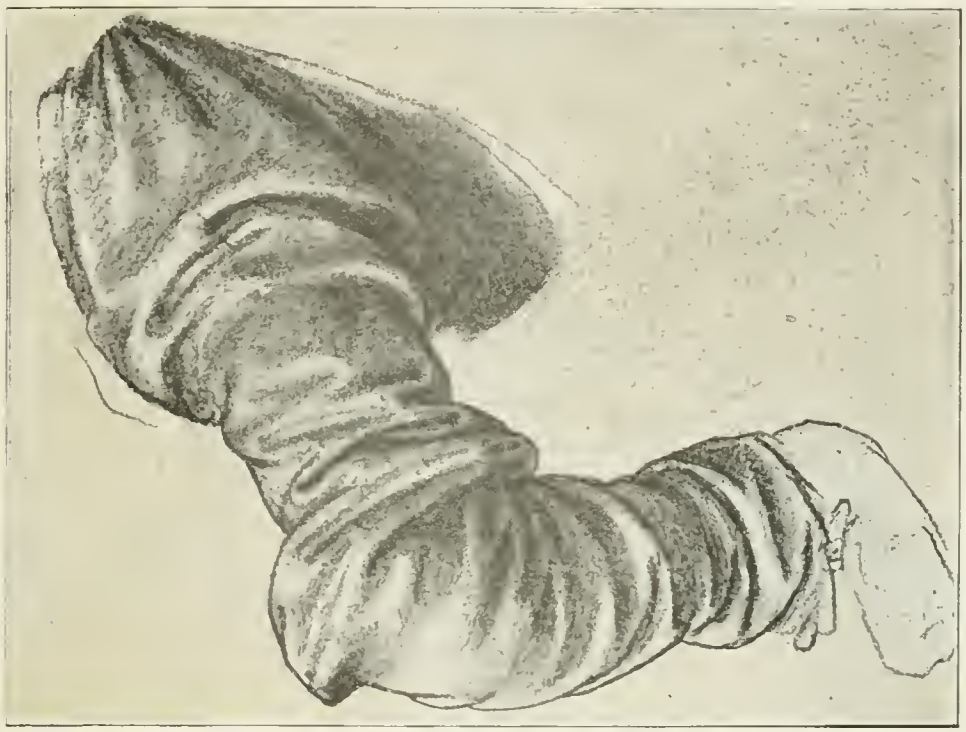
unremarkable. A little lower down is a study of Christ seated, his left hand outstretched, the first finger pointing to a dish, his right laid upon his breast with a somewhat theatrical gesture. We may mention that both in his studies for the *Adoration of the Magi* and for the *Last Supper*, Leonardo drew his figures naked, in order to observe the play of movements, just as he drew nearly all the apostles without beards, the better to note the play of facial expression. This sketch shows through how many stages the composition passed before completion.



STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF JUDAS.
(Windsor Library.)

These drawings are followed by notes, in which Leonardo indicates the attitude he intends to give to each apostle: "One, in the act of drinking, puts down his glass, and turns his head to the speaker; another, twisting his fingers together, turns to his companion, knitting his eyebrows; another, opening his hands, and turning the palms towards the spectator, shrugs his sholders, his mouth expressing the liveliest surprise; another whispers in the ear of a companion, who turns to listen, holding in one hand a knife, and in the other the loaf he has cut in two; another, turning with a knife in his hand, upsets a glass upon the table; another rests his hands upon the table, and looks; another, gasps in amazement; another leans forward to look at the speaker, shading his eyes with his hand; another, drawing back behind the one who leans forward, looks into the space between the wall and the stooping disciple."

Comparing this project with the painting, we see that, as at first conceived, the *Last Supper* contained a number of realistic motives, perhaps rather over-familiar for so solemn a theme. As he progressed, the artist gradually abandoned them. Thus, he suppressed the gesture by which one of the apostles put down the glass from which he had begun to drink, and the gesture of the apostle holding a loaf he had cut in two. Of the two knives spoken of in the note,



STUDY FOR THE ARM OF S. PETER.

(Windsor Library.)

only one appears in the painting, in the hand of S. Peter. There is no apostle shading his eyes with his hand, either. In short, the action, though less lively and dramatic, becomes more imposing, and gains in elevation.

A drawing in the Windsor Library, in which a disciple shades his eyes with his hand, is undoubtedly connected with this design. It further contains S. John, his head on the tablecloth, and another apostle who approaches Jesus with a reverent inclination of the body.

Leonardo, we must conclude, had for a time some thought of representing the institution of the Eucharist, a theme often treated by the Byzantines, and one which Justus of Ghent had illustrated a year or two before in a picture he painted for the Duke of Urbino.

A sketch on the same sheet, the intention of which it is difficult to seize, shows a group of ten persons at table, and Judas placed alone on the opposite side, as if he were already excluded from intercourse with the other disciples. A little later Leonardo broke away from tradition on this point. Instead of following the example of his predecessors and isolating Judas on one side of the table, like a diseased sheep, he conceived the more dramatic idea of placing him side by side with his victim ; from this proximity he evolved a motive of the most poignant mimetic expression : the explosion of surprise and indignation among the disciples at the Master's revelation of the treachery among them.

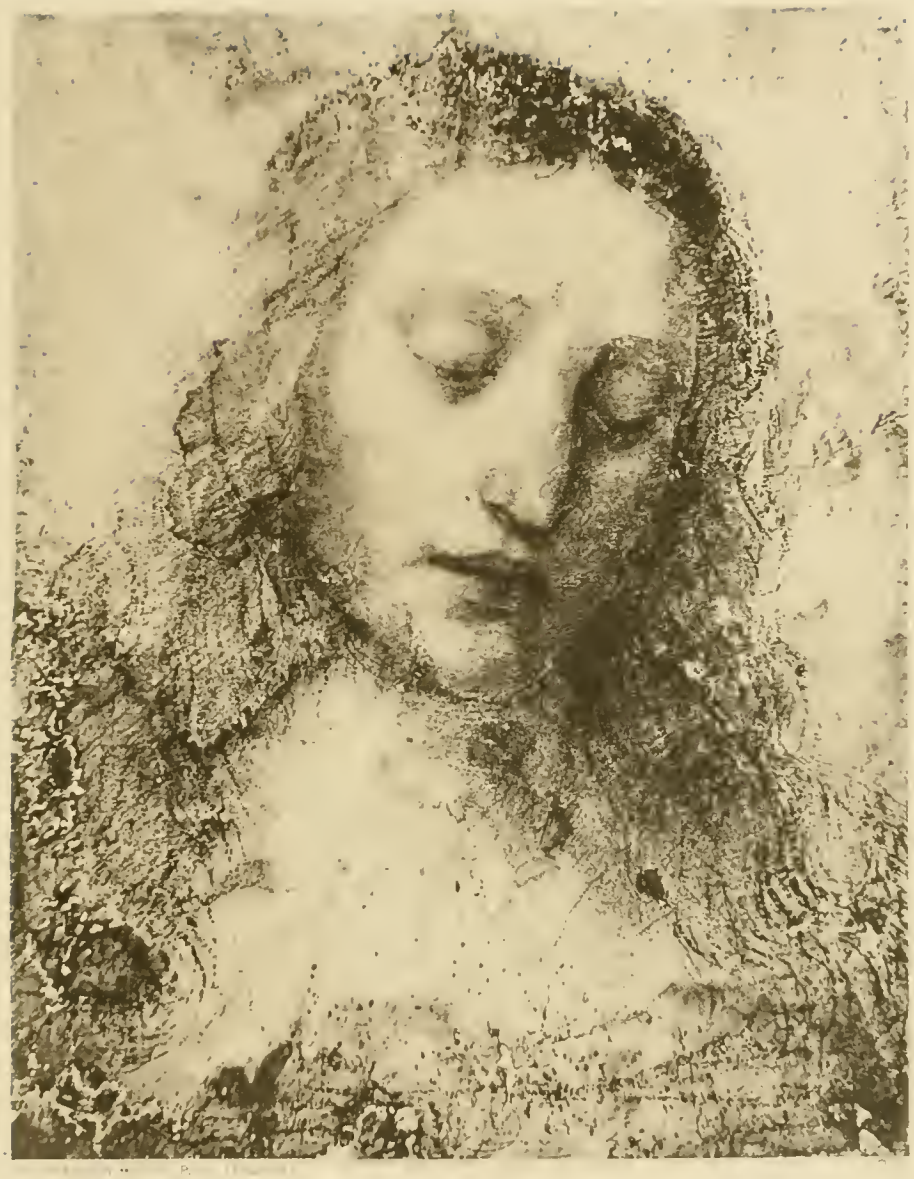
We may sum up by saying that the primitive conception of the scene was more or less violent ; the master gradually tempered and disciplined his action, and it is the expression of condensed and latent power in his final rendering to which he owes his most brilliant triumph.

Sketches for single figures follow on those for the composition as a whole. The majority are in the royal collection at Windsor. I may first call attention to a study in red chalk for the head of the apostle on the extreme left ; the beard is as yet short and slight (no. 8) ; another drawing in the same medium (no. 9), a head in profile to the right, is a study for the beardless apostle on the right, the third from the end, who holds out both hands towards the Saviour. (There are also certain points of resemblance here to the apostle on the extreme left of the composition.) The red chalk drawing (no. 10) is a beardless head in profile to the right ; it is for one of the apostles on the left. No. 11 is apparently the same head, rather older. The attitude is identical with that of Judas in the painting, and there can be little doubt that this study was the master's first thought for this justly famous type. A drawing in black chalk (no. 17) is another head, of an energetic cast, in profile to the right, with crisp, curling hair, and a short

IX

Study for the Head of Christ.

(THE BRERA, MILAN.)



beard. It is for the apostle last, or last but one, on the right. The master, as we see by these various examples,[1] experimented as freely in his choice of types as in the general arrangement of his composition.

Various critics have attempted to identify the twelve disciples; but save in the cases of three or four, their conjectures seem to have been pure hypothesis. Leonardo himself noted the names of each person on the red chalk drawing in the Accademia at Venice; but he only introduced one or two of these figures in the painting itself.[2]

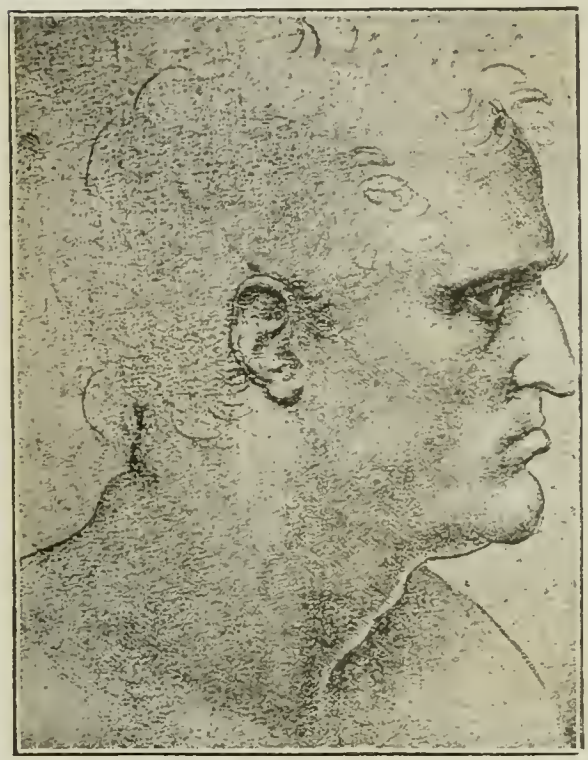
The perfection of grouping achieved in the *Last Supper* would of itself be sufficient to mark an epoch in the annals of painting. Its ease and rhythm are indescribable, The figures, placed on two planes in perspective, are further arranged in groups of three, with the exception of Christ, who, isolated in the centre, dominates the action. Eight of the apostles are in profile, three three-quarters to the front; Jesus and S. John face the spectator. The skill and knowledge necessary to bring these trios of heads into relation one with another, to animate the groups without destroying their balance, to vary the lines without detracting from their harmony, and finally to connect the various groups, were so tremendous, that neither reasoning nor calculation could have solved a problem so intricate; but for a sort of divine inspiration, the most gifted artist would have failed. I may add that the most perfect sense of line and mass would have proved insufficient without an equally perfect knowledge of chiaroscuro and of aërial perspective, for some of the juxtapositions—that, for instance, of the

[1] The drawings in the Grand Ducal collection at Weimar (heads of apostles), I take to be, not studies for the *Last Supper*, but drawings made from it, and, consequently, not by Leonardo's hand. They are the subject of an article by B. Stark in the *Deutsches Kunstblatt* of 1852 and of articles by Messrs. Frizzoni, Dehio, etc., and are said to have come from the Arconati collection, whence they passed into that of the Zeni family, of Venice. They were bought by the English Consul, Outry, and crossing the Channel. successively formed part of the Lawrence and of the Woodburn collections, before they were bought by the King of Holland.

[2] The following are the names adopted by Bossi: To the right of Christ, starting from the centre: S. John, Judas, SS. Peter, Andrew, James the Less, and Bartholomew; to the left (also from the centre): S. James the Greater, throwing out his arms as if in amazement, SS. Thomas, Philip, Matthew, Thaddeus, and Simon. Note that these identifications are the same as those inscribed on the old copy at Ponte Capriasco.

head facing three quarters to the front, relieved against a head in profile—are too daring to have been successfully attempted by means of mere draughtsmanship or linear perspective.

The way was opened at last; Raphael was not slow to follow in the footsteps of Leonardo the pioneer, whose worthy rival he proved himself, first in the *Dispute of the Sacrament*, and afterwards in the *School of Athens*.



STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF S. MATTHEW
(Windsor Library.

The anecdotes related by Bandello, Vasari, and Lomazzo might lead us to suppose that Leonardo introduced portraits in the *Last Supper*. But this was not the case. The master, no doubt, relied to some extent on living models for the general lines of his types; but he was too complete an idealist to content himself with what he looked upon as the first portion only of his task, a work of preparation. Hence, with the exception of two or three types, in which certain popular traits are noticeable, all the heads have been subjected to a long and elaborate process of assimilation and arrangement, with the result that we see before us, not mere representatives of the Milanese race, but citizens of the world. Nor did Leonardo lay his predecessors under contribution; there is only one head, perhaps, that of the second apostle from the end on the right (S. Thaddeus), with its marked Semitic type and floating hair, which recalls some model of the school of Giotto or of Siena.

The dominant notes in all these faces are virility, breadth, gravity,

conviction. They indicate free and upright natures, men who have a perfect consciousness of their feelings, and are ready to accept the responsibility for their actions. Energy and loyalty are stamped on every feature. The master has given a great variety of types. (I am speaking less of physical differences, such as the crisp, waving, or curly hair of the various heads, than of moral divergencies.) In some, plain fishermen transformed into missionaries, he has preserved the rudeness proper to their former calling. Of this class is the apostle to the left of Jesus, who extends his arms and opens his mouth to express his stupefaction. To others—as, for instance, the old man with a long beard on the left, he has given a patriarchal majesty; to others again—such as the beloved disciple and S. Philip—the sweetness of the "quattrocento" adolescent, with the resignation of the Christian convert. Judas, with his hooked nose, his bold forehead, his admirably defined silhouette, is a perfect type of the malefactor. It would be impossible to imagine anything more dramatic than these contrasts.



STUDY FOR THE HEAD OF S. PHILIP.
(Windsor Library.)

How little affinity was there between such a conception and the delicate refinements and elegances of Il Moro's Court! What power and vigour breathe from these actors in a drama which, overflowing the boundaries of its narrow Milanese environment, has thrilled humanity for four centuries!

If we turn to expression and gesture, we must again do homage to

the master's extraordinary perception of dramatic effect. The Saviour has just uttered the fateful words: "One of you shall betray me," with sublime resignation. In a moment, as by an electric shock, he has excited the most diverse emotions among the disciples, according to the character of each. One rises, as if asking his Master to repeat the accusation, for as yet he can scarcely believe his ears; another shudders in horror; those who are placed farther from Jesus communicate their impressions one to another; S. James the Greater stretches out his arms as if in amazement; S. Thomas, his forefinger uplifted, threatens the unknown traitor; S. Philip, rising, and laying both hands on his breast, cries in anguish: "Master, is it I?" Doubt, surprise, distrust, indignation, are manifested by ineffable traits. Souls vibrate in unison, from one end of the table to the other. But it was necessary to mingle lighter notes in the epic concert, in order to emphasise this outburst of generous feeling. Judas, leaning comfortably on his elbow, the money-bag in his right hand, his left opening as if involuntarily when he hears his treachery unmasked, is the personification of the hardened villain, who has justified his crime in his own mind, and is bent on carrying it through to the end. S. John, his head bowed, his clasped hands on the table, is a perfect type of supreme devotion, gentleness, and faith.

Inspiration, or the most prodigious experimental knowledge, whichever term we may elect to use—and, in Leonardo's case, it is difficult to say which would be the more exact—is apparent even in the details generally sacrificed by the most famous artists. "Looking at the hands alone," says Burckhardt, "we feel as if painting had slumbered hitherto, and had suddenly awakened." Since the time of Giotto, the great dramatist, no such important attempt to translate the passions of the soul by means of gesture had been made. Leonardo, indeed, does not make us hear the cries of mothers, whose infants have been torn from them by Herod's executioners, or of the damned, tormented by demons in hell. His subject demanded treatment less violent than these. But with what consummate art he renders all the intricacies of feeling! How full of delicate gradation and reticence is his pantomime, entirely free though it is from artificiality! How fully we feel the artist's mastery of his subject, nay, more, his perfect participation in the

X

Head of S. John. An Early Copy from "The Last Supper."

(WEIMAR MUSEUM.)



sentiments with which he endows his characters! For the *Last Supper* is more than a miracle of art. Leonardo's heart and soul had as great a part in it as his imagination and his intellect. Without such participation, can any work of art live?[1]

While affirming the principles of idealism throughout the whole of his work, Leonardo has nevertheless endeavoured to give his composition all the appearance of reality. Fearing to fall into abstraction, he has multiplied the details that give an illusion of life. With what care he has painted all the accessories of the frugal banquet! The table is laid with dishes, bowls, bottles, glasses that give an opportunity for the play of varied light, rolls of bread, fruit—pears and apples, some with a leaf still clinging to the stalk. Making a concession to the conventions of his day, he has not forgotten the salt-cellar overturned by Judas. He has treated the table-cloth itself with the utmost care, marking the folds of the damask, the pattern at the ends, the four knotted corners. It is to this minute observation, which a modern master of style would despise, and which Leonardo had learnt from the Primitives, that the picture owes its convincing quality. It was because he had gauged and probed the mass of detail involved in such a problem to its depths, that Leonardo was able to simplify and to condense when necessary, without becoming merely declamatory.

The *mise-en-scène* increases the illusion, besides adding greatly to the effect of the composition. It is a large room, extremely simple in line; the walls to right and left are decorated with four panels of

[1] In the *Trattato della Pittura*, cap. 368, *et seq.*, Leonardo the theorist has formulated the rules applied by Leonardo the painter in the *Last Supper*:

"How the arms and hands should reveal the intention of the actor in every movement. The arms and hands should manifest the actor's intention as far as possible; he who feels keenly constantly uses them to enforce what his soul would express. When good orators wish to persuade those who listen to them, they always have recourse to their arms and hands to emphasise their words. True, there are fools who despise this resource. Seeing them in the tribune, we might suppose them to be wooden statues, through whose mouths the voice of some speaker hidden behind passes. This is a grave defect in real persons, still graver in those represented by art. For if their author does not give them lively gestures, corresponding to their parts, they are doubly dead, firstly because they have no life in reality, and secondly, because their attitude is lifeless. But to return to our subject: I shall treat below of certain motions of the soul, namely, of anger, pain, fear, sudden terror, grief, flight or precipitation, authority, sloth, diligence, &c."

brownish tapestry, of a very simple pattern, enframed in mouldings of white stone. The wall at the end is broken by three square-headed windows, the central one surmounted by a semi-circular pediment ; through these windows we see an undulating landscape, with scattered buildings, and distant blue mountains. An open timbered ceiling completes the architecture of the room, which has a monumental aspect, in spite of its severity. There is not



"THE LAST SUPPER." LEFT SIDE. (IN ITS PRESENT STATE.)

an ornament, not a fragment of sculpture, to divert attention from the action.

Leonardo was undoubtedly the advocate of a rigorous delimitation in the various branches of art. It would be difficult otherwise to explain why he, familiar as he was with all the laws of architecture, should have excluded from his pictures those architectural backgrounds and views of buildings so admirably calculated to enhance their effect. Perhaps no other artist, with the exception of Brunellesco, Piero della Francesca, and Mantegna, had worked out the laws

of linear perspective with equal ardour. It would, therefore, have been easy for him to have brought the various planes of his compositions into relief by the introduction of buildings. But the only works in which we find him making use of this artifice are the *Last Supper* and the cartoon for the *Adoration of the Magi*; in the latter, only for the background. To this artistic scruple, Leonardo's easel pictures no doubt owe much of their freedom; but, on the other hand, it has



"THE LAST SUPPER." RIGHT SIDE. (IN ITS PRESENT STATE.)

deprived them of many beauties. It is evident that the innumerable devices of linear perspective, the art of bringing figures, buildings, and ornament into relief by their inter-relation, enabled Mantegna to give to decorative painting a vigour, a wealth of combination, unknown before his time; that the progress thus achieved was carried further still by the Venetians, notably by Paolo Veronese, the successor of Mantegna in this domain; and that it was finally brought to perfection in the seventeenth century by the great Rubens, in his turn the artistic offspring of Veronese. Leonardo, however, seems to have

had too deep a veneration for the human form to subordinate it to the exigencies of any architect, even such an architect as his rival Bramante.[1]

The *Last Supper* has undergone so many sacrilegious mutilations that it is, unhappily, no longer possible to judge of its technical quality. I must be content to say that the general tone was limpid, sunny, and exquisitely delicate. The master made use of simple tones only, but these he varied agreeably. Most of the figures wear a red robe and a blue mantle, or "vice versâ;" but among these we note yellow tunics, green mantles, green tunics, mantles of yellowish brown, a purplish tunic and mantle, and here and there, a yellowish band or border, to relieve them. The costumes themselves are extremely simple, as we may suppose those of Christ and his disciples to have been. They consist of a toga, or rather tunic, with closely fitting sleeves, but loose at the neck, and leaving the throat bare; over this is thrown a full, flowing cloak; an uncut precious stone sometimes takes the place of a brooch or fibula, and the bare feet are cased in sandals. Despite this severity, the draperies are cast with consummate knowledge and perfection. Those of the Saviour are especially ample and majestic. The tunic is displayed on the right breast and shoulder, and the mantle is draped from the left shoulder across the body, enveloping all the rest of the figure in its folds.

In the *Last Supper* of the monastery of Santa Maria delle Grazie, painting triumphs over the final difficulties, resolves the final problems of æsthetics and of technique. Leonardo had realised his ideal, whether we judge of his work by its arrangement of line and mass, its colour, its movement, its treatment of drapery, or its dramatic expression. Alas! the master's triumph was short-lived. Incalculable disasters were soon to burst upon his protector and his fellow-citizens. But let us not anticipate events. For a moment, we may linger in

[1] Leonardo protests against exuberance of ornament in the *Trattato della Pittura* (cap. 182): "In historical compositions," he says, "do not add to the figures and other objects ornaments so numerous that they injure the form and attitude of the figures, and the reality ('l'essentia') of the objects."

delighted contemplation of Leonardo's masterpiece in all the plenitude of its splendour.[1]

Innumerable copies, Italian, French, Flemish, and German, attest the admiration excited by the work. One of Leonardo's pupils, Marco d'Oggiono, made a sort of speciality of reproductions of the *Last Supper*; others copied it in tapestry, marble, and metal. Raphael was inspired by it in a drawing now in the Albertina: the apostle who presses his hands against his breast as if protesting his innocence, was obviously suggested by Leonardo's composition, though the figure falls far short of its prototype. Indeed, the work throughout is summary; the groups are ill distributed, as compared with the rich and varied arrangement of Leonardo's masses; rhythm and vigour are alike wanting. The Christ is insignificant, and lacking in majesty. The two most satisfactory figures are those of the disciples on either side of the Saviour, questioning him, their hands on their hearts. We cannot but feel that where Leonardo triumphed, even a Raphael could not compete with him. A little later, Andrea del Sarto paid his tribute of admiration to Leonardo in his fresco at San Salvi, as did Holbein in his picture in the Basle Museum.

But the superiority of the *Last Supper* at Milan was incontestable.

[1] The *Last Supper* underwent innumerable vicissitudes. Louis XII. was so struck by its beauty that he determined to remove it to France. He sought everywhere for architects who would undertake to construct a framework of wooden or iron battens by means of which it might be taken from the wall without accident, and shrank from no expense, so great was his desire to possess it. But as the painting adhered obstinately to the wall, "His Majesty, according to the testimony of Paolo Giovio and of Vasari, was obliged to carry his desires away with him, and to leave the painting to the Milanese." The process of which Leonardo had made use was so defective that three parts of the work may be said to have been destroyed by the middle of the sixteenth century. Vasari, who saw it in 1566, laments the ruin to which it was already reduced, as does also Lomazzo. In 1652, the incredible atrocity was perpetrated, by which the legs of the figures were cut away to make a door! In 1726, the work was restored, or rather re painted, by Bellotto; in 1770, by Mazzo; and it was probably subjected to the desecration of some miserable dauber of our own century. During the Revolution, the refectory was converted into a forage store and stable! For the various restorations the painting has undergone, see Bossi's *Del Cenacolo di Leonardo da Vinci* (Milan, 1810), and Stendhal's *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*, ed. 1868, p. 150–151.

Leonardo further painted portraits of Lodovico il Moro, with his eldest son Maximilian, and of Beatrice, with her second son, Francesco, in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, on either side of Montorfano's *Crucifixion*. Vasari, who has been unjustly accused of not having appreciated the genius of his illustrious countryman, speaks of these portraits as truly sublime. (See p. 95.)

No artist might henceforth wholly escape its fascination, though none could attain to its perfection.

On several occasions Leonardo was employed on the decoration of the ducal residences.

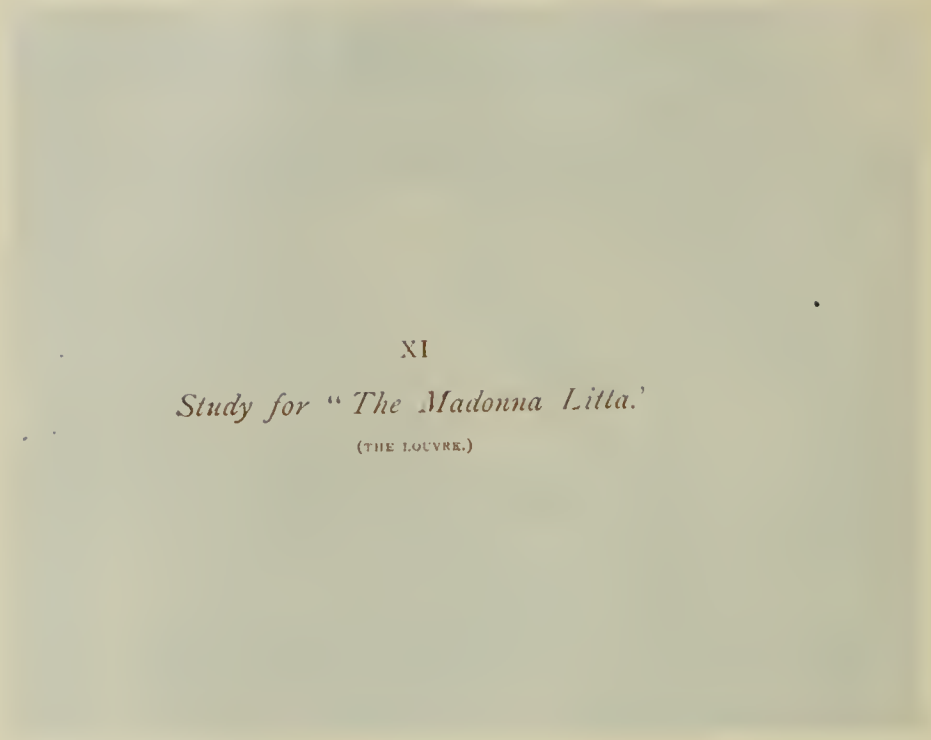
He worked principally in the famous "Castello di Porta Giovia" (Gate of Jupiter, now the Vercelli Gate), in which the Visconti had



"THE LAST SUPPER." LEFT SIDE. (IN ITS PRESENT STATE.)

collected so many treasures. Destroyed in the revolution of 1447, it was rebuilt by the Sforzi on a more magnificent scale than before, only to be given over again to pillage. In our own times, it was converted into a barrack, and was used as such till its restoration was determined. The task of transforming this venerable monument into a central museum worthy of the city of Milan has fortunately been entrusted to the eminent architect, Signor Luca Beltrami.

I may here say a few words concerning this famous building,



XI

Study for "The Madonna Litta."

(THE LOUVRE.)



which played so great a part in the history of the Sforzi, and of Leonardo.[1]

Somewhat irregular in construction, the main façade, on the Piazza d'Armi, is flanked at either end by a massive tower of freestone. Brick is the material mainly used throughout the rest of the building. The machicolated walls are pierced by windows, some pointed, some square-headed. The interior, which is terribly mutilated, consists of gigantic



"THE LAST SUPPER." RIGHT SIDE. (IN ITS PRESENT STATE.)

but somewhat gloomy halls, which were converted into stables at one time, and small, elegantly proportioned rooms. Semicircular arches, springing from massive monolithic columns, their plinths still preserving the Romanesque imprint in places, coincide with the architraves, which rest on slender pillars. The capitals, many of which are very richly ornamented, are adorned with armorial shields, and devices. Here and there, we find windows decorated with terra cottas, vases of flowers, etc ; but in

[1] The history of the Castle has been written by Signor Casati (*Vicende edilizie del Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1876) and by Signor Beltrami (*Il Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1894.—*Resoconto dei Lavori di restauro esequiti al Castello di Milano*, Milan, 1898.)

general, beauty seems to have been sacrificed to the exigencies of defence. The employment of a variety of artists—Filarete, Benedetto Ferrini, Bramante, etc.—explains the irregularities of the plan.

Several sketches and notes of Leonardo's show that he occupied himself with schemes for the modification of the defences, the moats, bastions, etc. Among his projects was one for replacing Filarete's tower by a kind of lighthouse, 150 metres high. We have also his plans for a pavilion and baths, to be built for the Duchess in the park.[1] Not content with doing the work of architect and decorator, he himself made the models for the eels' heads, from which hot and cold water was to flow, and even gave minute instructions as to the proportions of each: three parts of hot water to one of cold. The date, 1492, written at some little distance from the plan of the baths, probably refers to the year of their construction.

The discovery of some fragments of frescoes in several rooms of the Castle by Herr Müller-Walde, has given rise to a good deal of discussion within the last two or three years. Leonardo has been suggested as the author of these decorations; and indeed, in one of his letters to Lodovico, the master himself mentions his paintings in the "Camerini."[2] Here again his dilatoriness seems to have annoyed his protector. At any rate, in June, 1496, there was a question of some scandal caused by the painter engaged on the decoration of the "Camerini," in consequence of which the said painter was forced to withdraw. The Duke's secretary accordingly proposed to ask Perugino, then at Venice, to finish the work. In 1497 the Duke returned to the charge, and tried to persuade the authorities of Perugia to

[1] Beltrami, *Il Castello di Milano*, p. 465–477.

[2] An autograph note records the details of some of the works in the Castello di Porta Giovia. They belong to the domain of the decorator rather than to that of the historical painter. This is the document in question: "The narrow gutter over the rooms, 30 lire; the gutter below, each square compartment, 7 lire; cost of blue, gold, ceruse, plaster, size, and glue, 3 lire; time, three days; histories (subjects) under these gutters, with their pilasters, 12 lire each; I reckon the outlay for enamel, blue, and other colours at 1½ lire; I reckon the days spent over the design, the little pilaster, etc., as five. Item for each little vault, 7 lire. . . . The cornice under the window, 6 soldi the 'braccia.' Item for 24 Roman histories (*i.e.* classic subjects, perhaps grotesques), 10 lire," etc. . . . The modest sum claimed for this last item authorises the supposition that the painting consisted of small decorative motives, perhaps in *camaïeu* (MS. H. of the Library of the Institut, fol. 129v°).

send him their famous fellow-citizen. In April, 1498, Leonardo was at work again in the "saletta negra," in accordance with the programme he had elaborated in concert with the chief engineer, Ambrogio Ferrario, and in the "camera grande delle asse, cioè, della torre."

But to return to the recently-discovered frescoes.

The "Sala del Tesoro," which occupies the ground-floor of the tower at the western angle of the Castle, contains a *Mercury* or *Argus*, the head of which has unfortunately disappeared.[1] Around this figure is painted architecture in perspective, richly decorated with consoles, medallions, etc., and inscriptions:

Quod deus abstulerat tot lumina reddidit Argo,
Pervigil anguigerae servet ut areis opes.
Adulterinæ abite claves.

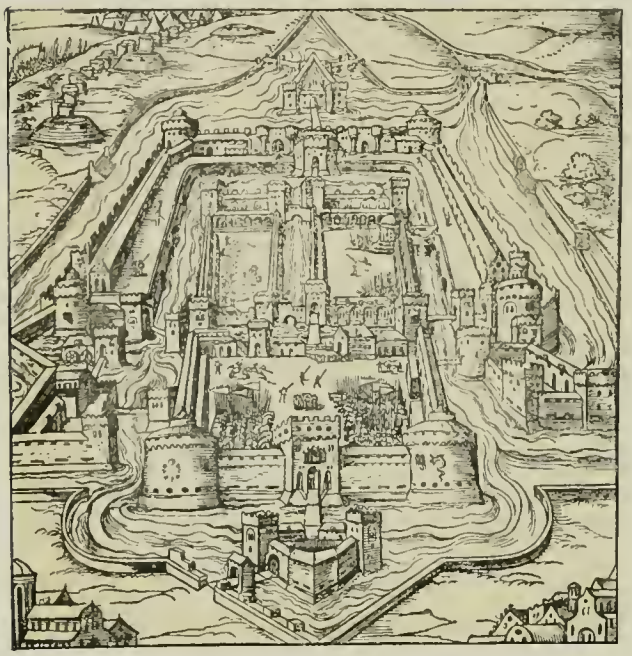
In one of the medallions is a thief, crouching down, his right hand in a chest; near him, four judges, seated, one of them a bishop; further off, the Duke of Milan, enthroned between two pages. Then two men, standing, one holding scales, the other, an executioner, preparing to carry out the sentence. The three lay judges, according to Herr Müller-Walde, recall the three figures on the left in Leonardo's cartoon for the *Adoration of the Magi*, in the Uffizi. A second medallion shows Mercury looking at the corpse of Argus. The figure of the god, says Herr Müller-Walde, was the prototype of the *Apollo* in the little picture from the Moore collection, now in the Louvre; it is of a pronounced Umbrian type.[2]

But is it the work of Leonardo or of Bramante? The latter name was the one suggested to me the moment I looked at a photograph of the fresco. The precision of the contours, and an indescribable want of liberty, imagination, and fire, an indefinable archaism, certainly incline me to pronounce for the great architect,

[1] Beltrami, *Il Castello di Milano*, p. 214–215. Cf. p. 197–198.—Müller-Walde: *Jahrbuch der kg Kunstsammlungen*, 1897; p. 111–117.

[2] A very useless discussion, if the fresco is not by Leonardo, has been raised as to whether the central figure represented Mercury or Argus. (*Jahrbuch der kg. Kunstsammlungen*, 1897, p. 146 *et seq.*—Novato: *La Perseveranza*, 24 January, 1898.—Salomon; Reinach, *La Chronique des Arts*, 1898, p. 47.—D. Sant' Ambrogio: *Lega lombarda*, 4–5; February, 1898.)

rather than for the great painter. This is also the opinion of Signor Beltrami, the distinguished Milanese architect and archæologist, who has directed the restoration of the Castle with so much taste, and to whom I am indebted for the photograph here reproduced. My friend the Baron de Geymüller, the devout and acute historian of Bramante, fully confirms it, and the author of the catalogue of the exhibition of Lombard Masters, held at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, London, in 1898, is no less emphatic in his support. We must not forget the inconsequences of which Herr Müller-Walde is guilty. He attributes the surrounding medallions to Bramante, though he makes Leonardo the author of the Mercury. Is it likely that two masters, each so distinguished in his own line, would have collaborated on a purely decorative piece of work?[1]



THE CASTLE OF MILAN. FROM A SIXTEENTH CENTURY DRAWING.

Another room in the castle, the "Sabetta Negra," is adorned with four couples of winged genii, finely developed in form, and distinguished by great freedom of movement, who are flying or running amidst a decoration of rich festoons. Here again, Herr Müller-Walde sees the hand of Leonardo, or at least, of one of his pupils. Signor Beltrami is more cautious.[2] For

[1] It is true that a microscopic drawing in the *Codex Atlanticus* (fol. 94)—we give Herr Müller-Walde all credit for having noted the fact—represents a man standing in the attitude of Praxiteles' *Apollo Sauroctonos*, a possible link between the antique marble and the fresco in the Castle at Milan. But can we infer from this that the fresco was painted by Leonardo? We might as well affirm that Leonardo was the sculptor of the *David*, and not Michelangelo, because there is a sketch of the statue in a drawing by Leonardo in the British Museum.

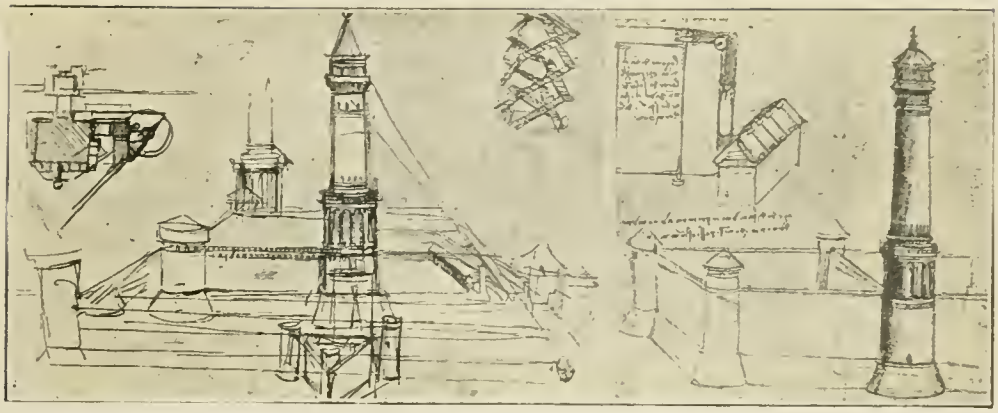
[2] *Il Castello di Milano*, p. 700–703.

XII

"The Madonna Litta."

(THE HERMITAGE, S. PETERSBURG.)





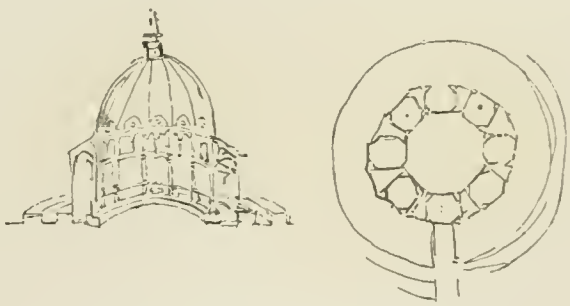
DESIGN FOR A LIGHTHOUSE, REPRODUCED FROM J. P. RICHTER'S WORK.
(Vallardi Collection, the Louvre.)

my own part, I am inclined to pronounce the painting a work of the second quarter of the sixteenth century, by some one belonging to the circle of the Campi, who was haunted by reminiscences of Luini.

The decoration of the "Sala della Torre," or "delle Asse," which we know to have been undertaken by Leonardo, consists of a vast interlacement (one of the master's favourite motives), forming a kind of bower of branches of trees, and knots or bows.

In addition to these mural decorations, Leonardo painted a certain number of easel pictures : a *Nativity* (which has disappeared), presented by Il Moro to the Emperor of Germany, and several portraits.[1]

We have already mentioned the portraits of Lodovico il Moro and Beatrice d'Este, painted opposite the *Last Supper*, and long since destroyed. Let us now consider the portraits of nobles and ladies of Il Moro's Court.



PLAN OF A PAVILION FOR THE DUCHESS OF MILAN.
(Library of the Institut de France.)

Leonardo, as we know, made his *début* at that Court as a singer and lute-player. We shall not, therefore, be surprised to find him humouring the caprices of his patron in his artistic capacity. He readily consented to paint

[1] Milanesi, *Documenti inediti riguardanti Leonardo da Vinci*, p. 11.

portraits of the ducal family, legitimate and illegitimate. Two of the prince's mistresses, Cecilia Gallerani and Lucrezia Crivelli, sat to him in succession.

Despite Il Moro's passion for her, and the dithyrambs of contemporary poets, Cecilia Gallerani's name would have been forgotten long since, but for the immortality conferred on her by Leonardo's brush.

It is not known when the master painted this portrait. It was, however, before 1492; for the Florentine poet, Bellincioni, who died that year, extolled it in a sonnet rather more rugged than usual;[1] and, in a letter written in 1498, Cecilia speaks of it as having been painted when she was still very young.[2]

What became of La Gallerani's portrait? De Pagave says it was in the Palazzo Bonesana at Milan in the seventeenth century, and that Cecilia was painted with a cithar in her hand. Amoretti adds that in his time there was a copy in the Milan Gallery. This copy has been identified with an absolutely insignificant portrait now in the Ambrosiana, known as the *Lute-Player*. Among other old copies, we hear of one belonging to Signor Frisiani of Milan, and another in the Minutoli collection, near Greifenberg in Silesia.[3]

[1] Another sonnet by Bellincioni, in which the name Cecilia occurs, is said by Signor Uzielli to refer, not to Cecilia Gallerani, but to some unknown namesake of hers.

[2] "We saw some fine portraits by Giambellino to-day," writes Isabella d'Este to Cecilia, "and this led us to discuss Leonardo's works, and to wish we could see some, in order to compare them with other pictures in our possession. We know he painted a portrait of you from life, and we beg you to send us your portrait by the bearer, whom we despatch for this special purpose. Besides desiring to make the comparison in question, we have also a great wish to see your features. As soon as we have examined and compared it, the picture shall be returned to you," etc.

To which Cecilia replies: "Most excellent and illustrious lady I have read what your Highness says as to your desire to see my portrait. I send it to you, and should send it even more willingly, if it were like me. Let not your Highness suppose me to impute any fault to the master, for I do not think his equal is to be found; but the picture was painted when I was extremely young ('in una età si imperfetta'), and my face has changed so much that, seeing the portrait, and seeing me, no one would suppose it to be meant for me. I beg your Highness, however, to receive this proof of my goodwill favourably, and not the portrait alone. For I am ready to do much more to give pleasure to your Highness, whose very devoted servant I am, and I commend myself a thousand times to your Grace. From Milan, April 29, 1498. From your Excellency's servant, Scicilia Visconta Bergamina." (Luzio, *Archivio storico dell' Arte*, 1888, p. 181.)

[3] Uzielli, *Leonardo da Vinci e tre Gentildonne milanesi*.—Amoretti mentions another supposed portrait of Cecilia, which belonged to the Pallavicini family of San Calocero in his time. It represented a woman between thirty and forty years old. There was no

But all this is mere hypothesis, and what we really know of Leonardo's portrait is summed up in Bellincione's sonnet.

The portrait of Cecilia's successor, Lucrezia Crivelli, is, according to some critics, to be identified with the famous picture in the Louvre known as *La Belle Ferronière*. This delicate work, admirably frank and firm in handling and in colour, rich and luscious as a fine Ghirlandajo, is unfortunately disfigured by numerous cracks, and by clumsy repaints, which have blurred it and made it heavy. Its essential distinction, however, has survived all ill-treatment. The costume of the sitter is at once dignified and simple: she wears a bodice of a fine red, slashed sleeves tied with bows of yellowish ribbon, and an embroidery of gold on a black ground as a finish to the square-cut opening which displays her throat. Her jewels are a diamond or ruby, hanging from a bandeau in the centre of her forehead, and a necklace of alternate black and white beads in four rows. In front of her is a stone balustrade. The work has all the freshness and simplicity of the Primitives, with an added grace and liberty. The eyes are large and well-opened; the carefully painted lids are somewhat heavy and languid; the mouth is sweet and noble; the general outline full of grace; the hair is drawn down in flat bands on the temples, and the whole expression is serious, chaste, and timid. If this was a prince's mistress, she was certainly not one of those proclamatory favourites, such as the fair Catelina, who demand an endless profusion of *fêtes* and jewels. Rather was she a Marie Touchet, or a Clara (the beloved of Egmont), happy in the love of a great prince, and asking neither for riches nor splendour, but only for his affection.[1]

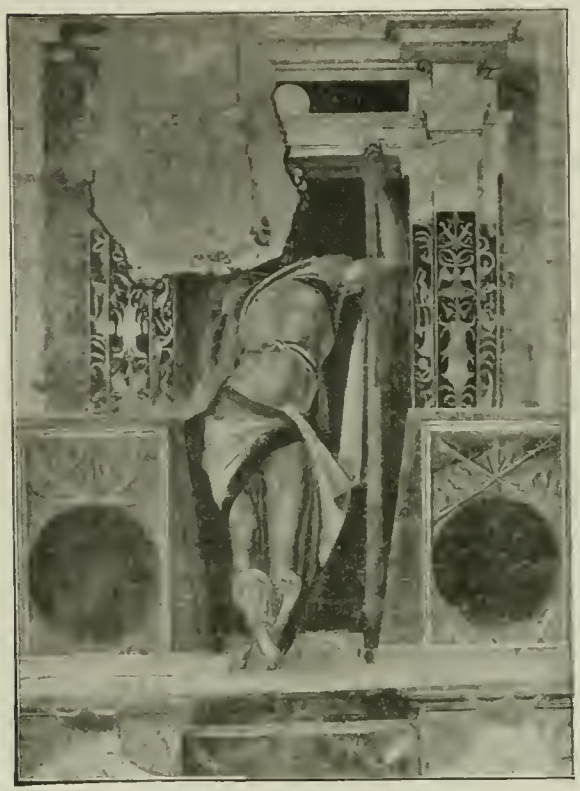
Two other pictures in the Ambrosiana, one of a man, the other of a woman, seem to belong to the category of official portraits.

The first, a bust three-quarters to the front, represents a beardless

lute, and the hand was occupied in arranging the folds of the dress. According to Amoretti, Leonardo painted La Gallerani a third time, as Saint Cecilia, in a picture which, in his time, belonged to Professor Franchi. Here again we have to deal with conjectures devoid of all scientific basis.

[1] The *Codex Atlanticus* contains three Latin epigrams of a somewhat trivial order, addressed to Leonardo in praise of Lucrezia's portrait. M. Valton, one of the most learned and discriminating of amateurs, calls my attention to the analogy between the Louvre portrait and the medal of Elisabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of Urbino. The head-dress, among other details, is almost identical. Unfortunately, it is difficult to solve the problem, the portrait being full face, and the medal a profile.

man of about thirty, in a red cap and a black doublet, relieved by two bands of brown. In spite of a vigour of modelling worthy of Rembrandt, the work lacks freedom and individuality. The expression is sullen. The painter seems to have taken little pleasure in his task. The excessive brownness of the colour also injures the general effect. The picture, too, is hardly more than a sketch.[1]



MERCURY OR ARGUS. A FRESCO BY BRAMANTE (?).
(The Castle of Milan.)

The second portrait in the Ambrosiana is a half-length of a young woman in profile. The face is rather long and thin, but exquisitely pure in outline. It is painted in brownish tones, and relieved against a dark background. There is a slight smile on the lips, the corners of which are strongly marked; the eye, dark, deep, and limpid, is put in with a rich, generous brush. The painting is firm rather than fused, but the firmness is fat and luscious. Leonardo has worked a miracle, and painted a portrait while creating a type. The admirably modelled head combines certain defects—a turned-up nose, slightly atrophied—with beauties that disarm criticism; a tender, almost voluptuous mouth, a long veiled

[1] According to the *Cicerone* (Burckhardt), this is a portrait of the young Gian Galeazzo Sforza, Il Moro's nephew, the lawful ruler of Milan. But besides the fact that the apparent age of the sitter does not agree with that of the young Duke, the face shows no trace of resemblance to the refined and fragile Gian Galeazzo, as known to us by Caradosso's exquisite little medal. Signor Morelli attributes the male portrait in the Ambrosiana to the anonymous painter of the *Virgin of the Rocks* in the National Gallery of London. (*Die Galerie Borghese*, p. 235.) I confess that my connoisseurship does not go so far.

XIII

Portrait of a Young Princess.

(THE AMBROSIANA, MILAN.)



glance. The costume, a red dress, simple yet elegant, makes an exquisite harmony with the chestnut hair, which is drawn down in bandeaux along the cheek, and fastened under a pearl-embroidered net. The arm-hole of the slashed sleeve is embroidered with an interlaced pattern, finished off on the shoulder by a jewelled ornament of two large cut gems, and a hanging pear-shaped pearl. From a row of large pearls round the throat hangs a similar pendant, attached to a short gold chain. The whole work breathes an air of youth, of grace, and of freshness that only Leonardo could have suggested. Signor Morelli ascribes this picture to Ambrogio de Predis,[1] whereas Dr. Bode, while insisting on Leonardo's authorship, proves that the young woman represented was not, as has been asserted, Bianca Maria Sforza, wife of the Emperor Maximilian. Fortunately, Dr. Bode's arguments in favour of the authenticity of the work are irrefutable. The learned Director of the Berlin Gallery shows that Ambrogio de Predis certainly painted a portrait of Bianca Maria, which now forms part of the Arconati-Visconti collection in Paris, but that this has nothing in common, either in feature or technique, with the masterpiece in the Ambrosiana.[2]



PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN MAN.
(The Ambrosiana, Milan)

[1] *Die Galerie Borghese*, p. 238.—Cf. Motta, *Archivio storico lombardo*, 1893, p. 987.

[2] *Jahrbuch der kg. Kunstsammlungen*, 1889, no. 2.—A bronze statue in the cathedral at Innsprück represents Maximilian's consort standing, one hand on her hip, the other slightly extended. Her costume is gorgeous in the extreme. Strings of pearls are arranged upon her

From Leonardo's own admissions, as well as from the evidence of his contemporaries, it is evident that, unable to satisfy his own fastidious taste, he painted extremely slowly, correcting incessantly. Did he not himself declare that the painter who has no doubts makes no progress? "Quel pittore, che no' dubita, poco acquiesta" (*Trattato della Pittura*, cap. 62). If he left many works unfinished it was, as Vasari has well said, because he was always striving after a higher excellence. The biographer quotes Petrarch's verse in this connection:

> E l'amor di saper che m'ha si acceso,
> Che l'opera e retardato dal desio.
>
> "My love of knowledge so enflamed me,
> That my work was retarded by my desire."

Fortunately, he has left innumerable drawings to make up for the rarity of his pictures, and these reveal the incomparable mastery, the incredible variety of the draughtsman in the most varied aspects. It is to this manifestation of his genius that I now propose to call attention.

Although the painter too often left his creations mere sketches, the draughtsman tried his hand at every process, and excelled in all. We find him alternately making use of pen and ink, charcoal and silver-point, with equal mastery, the latter method being perhaps especially to his taste, because of the mysterious quality inherent in it. After his establishment at Milan, he used red chalk, a more expeditious medium, which first appears in his studies for the *Last Supper*. It is not improbable that his first essay, in fact, was the sketch in the

bodice; from her necklace hangs a diamond or ruby cut to a point, at the end of which is a pearl, as in the drawing in the Accademia at Venice here reproduced (p. 106), and the Arconati-Visconti picture. As in these again, the hair is brought down on either side of the face in bandeaux, hiding the ears, and is gathered into a net at the back of the head. The face, round and full, indeed, a little heavy, resembles the two portraits in question, but has nothing in common with that of the Ambrosiana picture.

Signor Coceva has attempted to show, in the *Archivio storico dell' Arte* (1889, p. 264), that the latter represents Beatrice d'Este. It has, in fact, certain analogies with her bust in the Louvre, especially in profile. But we have only to examine the various portraits of Beatrice to see that the unknown in the Ambrosiana is of a very different type. The lines of the mouth are totally dissimilar; the chin especially is of quite a different shape. In the Ambrosiana picture it is attached to the throat by a straight line of supreme distinction. In all Beatrice's authentic portraits, it is round and heavy.

Accademia at Venice, which is certainly one of the earliest studies for the composition.[1] He also used wash, water-colour, and body-colour.

The variety of paper used by the master was equally great. The majority of the studies for the *Virgin of the Rocks* are on green paper. I may instance the head of the Infant Saviour (in the Louvre) and the little S. John, in the same collection, and in the Duke of Devonshire's collection at Chatsworth.

According to several critics (Emile Galichon, Morelli, and Richter), one distinguishing characteristic of Leonardo's manner was his method of shading by means of parallel hatchings from left to right, a peculiarity to be explained by the fact that he was left-handed.[2] But M. de Geymüller has shown this theory to have been an exaggerated one. In one single drawing (a study in the Louvre for the little S. John of the *Virgin of the Rocks*), the hatchings are laid in seven different directions; in the corner of the eye, they are laid one above the other in three directions.[3]

A painter even more pre-eminently than a draughtsman, Leonardo avoided over-definite contours in painting. He modelled with colour and with light, rather than with lines and hatchings. I cannot do better than let him speak for himself here: "On the beauty of faces. Do not make the lines of the muscles too insistent ('con aspra definizione'), but allow soft lights to melt gradually into pleasant and agreeable shades. This gives grace and beauty."[4]

[1] Red chalk drawings in Richter's work: vol. i., plates xxi., xxix., xl., xliv., xlvi. xlvii., l., li., etc.—For the methods of draughtsmanship recommended by Leonardo, see Richter, vol. i., p. 315 *et seq.*

[2] "Looking over these sketches, made with the left hand, as we see by the direction of the hatchings (from left to right)," says Emile Galichon, "we are amazed at the facility with which Leonardo handled the pen. A careful examination of his drawings would almost lead us to the conclusion that his left hand was the more obedient to the pulsations of his soul, his right to the directions of his reason. When he wished to translate the feelings that stirred his heart, when he came home, perhaps, after having followed a man about all day whose bizarre or expressive features had struck him, his left hand fixed his emotion or his recollection rapidly on the paper. But when he wanted to model or work out a figure clearly present to his mind, the final study of the Infant Jesus for the *Virgin of the Rocks*, or the head of the *S. Anne* in the Louvre, his right hand undertook the task." (*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1867, vol. ii., p. 536.)

[3] *Les derniers Travaux sur Léonard de Vinci*, p. 55.

[4] *Trattato*, cap. 291.



A SHEET OF SKETCHES.
(Bonnat Collection, Paris.)

He recommends the use of the same colour for the contours as that used for the background —in other words, he deprecates the practice of separating the figures from the background by means of a dark outline (cap. 116).

To him, the chief triumph of painting lay in chiaroscuro and foreshortening: "Il chiaro e lo scuro insieme co li scorti è la eccelenzia della scienza della pittura" (cap. 671). He attached the utmost importance to relief, to the tactile quality of painting. Here he is at one with Michelangelo, who, in his letter to Varchi, pronounced painting to be excellent in proportion to the effect of relief it produces.[1]

On the other hand, as if divining the abuses that were to spring from Michelangelo's example, the author of the *Trattato* condemns the anatomist-painters, who, anxious to show their knowledge of bones, nerves, and muscles, paint figures that might be of wood (cap. 125. Cf. cap. 340).

It was, indeed, the human body in its



STUDY FOR A STANDING FIGURE.
(Library of the Institut de France.)

[1] *Lettere*, Milanesi's ed., p. 522.

most flexible aspect, and still more the human soul in its most sensitive moods, that he took as the basis and inspiration of his art. But it was the human body as a softly moulded mass, rather than as a bony, anatomical structure. In spite of his interest in anatomy, or rather myology, he had a horror of all things connected with death. No art was ever more radiant than his. Hence his distaste for architectural backgrounds. His independent genius rebelled against rigid statical laws.



STUDY OF A HEAD.
(The Louvre.)

I may add, to complete the antithesis between Leonardo and Michelangelo, that Leonardo was a respectful disciple of Nature, approaching her without foregone conclusions, whereas the great Florentine sculptor made his researches under the influence of a preconceived idea, a dominant ideal, and interpreted anatomy by artistic canons.



STUDY FOR THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF FR. SFORZA.
(Windsor Library.)

Is it possible to fix the dates of Leonardo's drawings? The German writer, Müller-Walde, has attempted it. For my own part, I think we may place a rung in the chronological ladder

here and there. Thus we know that there was a certain ruggedness about his pen-drawing about 1473, when the young artist was twenty years old.

There is, on the other hand, a series of drawings in black chalk or charcoal which are marked by a breadth, a suavity, and at the same time, by a freedom, wanting in the drawings of the first Florentine period. Among these are the *Young Man with a Lance*, the *Young Woman*, the so-called *Beatrice*, the *Convict*, the *Neptune*, etc., in the Windsor collection (nos. 60, 63, 65, 68 in the series published by the Grosvenor Gallery). Shall we be accused of temerity if we assign these drawings to the Milanese rather than to the Florentine period?

Although Leonardo's drawings escape chronological analysis, they are by no means all equal in quality. His sketches, for instance, are full of violent transitions and dissimilarities. Even in drawings the authenticity of which cannot be questioned—those, for instance, in his own manuscripts—the inequalities of technique are remarkable. The manuscripts preserved in Paris contain a series of absolutely coarse and archaic—or perhaps I should rather say Verrocchiesque—drawings. I may instance the man standing, with a child sitting (MS. B. fol. 4), and the David standing, holding a sword (MS. 2037, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, fol. 7, v.). No one would suppose them to be by Leonardo, if they were not in the midst of his own writings. His sketches for the Virgin and Child with a cat—the mother's figure singularly thick-set and ungraceful—are no less rough and uncouth. And yet the master had drawn the free and confident portrait of the conspirator Baroncelli as early as 1478. Thus, at every turn we are confronted by anomalies; at every moment, his pen becomes as clumsy as that of an inexperienced scholar.

Leonardo looked at drawing from three points of view. Firstly, as an art in itself,—an end, and not merely a means. The elaboration of some of his portraits sufficiently proves this. His disinterestedness on this point was greater than that of Raphael, whose drawings are almost without exception sketches and cartoons for his pictures. Secondly, drawing was in Leonardo's eyes a preliminary to the execution of pictures and statues; and thirdly, a kind of graphic commentary on, or necessary illustration of, his works. In the last case,

10

Head of an Old Man.

(BRITISH MUSEUM)



drawing was to him merely a form of writing, a means of rendering his thought more clearly. These rough sketches of his show the most admirable penetration and precision; they evoke the very essence of beings and of things. The most complex mechanisms become intelligible under Leonardo's pen or pencil.

Setting aside the innumerable sketches that illustrate the manuscripts, we have two distinct categories of drawings to consider: drawings made in preparation for pictures, and studies of heads.[1]

The first, I am bound to admit, betray a certain vacillation. The conception is too often confused, the handling hasty, and occasionally incorrect. Leonardo here obeys the precept in the *Trattato della Pittura* (cap. 64): "When sketching out a composition, work rapidly, and do not elaborate the drawing of the limbs. It will be enough to indicate their position; and you can finish them afterwards at your leisure."

The studies of heads, on the other hand, are marked by an extraordinary sincerity and assurance. Taken as a whole, these types make up a rich human iconography, ranging from the dreamy adolescent to the vigorous old man, robust as the Farnese Hercules. Note the marvellous variety even in such a detail as the arrangement of the hair. Here we have a luxuriant mane, encircling the face like an aureole; there, woolly, curly, waving or braided tresses.

The drawings for the *Battle of Anghiari*, especially those in the Turin Library, have a fire and vigour which are wanting in the drawings of the Florentine period, and betray an intention on the part of the master to measure himself with Michelangelo.

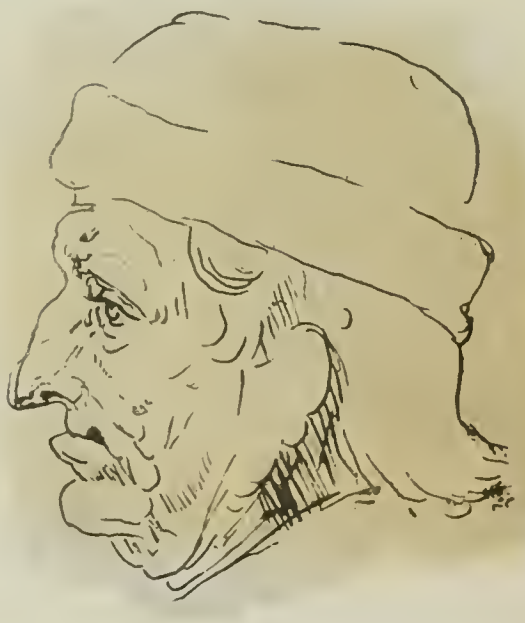
The so-called *Caricatures* serve as pendants to these types of ideal beauty, making up a gallery of idiots and crétins, goitred, toothless,

[1] In the master's manuscripts we find the embryoes of a series of figures which he afterwards developed and completed in finished drawings. Thus, certain birds in the manuscripts of the Institut de France (E. fol. 42 v°) were the forerunners of the standing eagle with outspread wings in the enigmatic drawing at Windsor (Grosvenor Gallery Series, no. 38). Thus, too, the interlaced ornaments of the engraving inscribed "Academia Leonardi Vinci" were preceded by a considerable number of analogous motives, such as the sketch in MS. E. (fol. 41 v°), in the Institut. The same process may be traced in the work of Raphael He, too, loved to ruminate. Some of his figures that seem to us the inspiration of a moment, were carefully elaborated. A boyish sketch in the Accademia at Venice became a figure of radiant beauty and astonishing firmness after a period of fifteen years.



A MUSE (?). FROM AN ENGRAVING ASCRIBED TO LEONARDO.
(British Museum.)

hare-lipped abortions, with noses and chins atrophied or developed to exaggeration. The artist who created the most perfect types of humanity also applied himself, long before Grandville and Callot, to the reproduction of the most monstrous deformities, caricatures which show the intermediate degree between the man and the beast, or, rather, man degraded below the level of the beast, by a hideous hybridism. In some examples, the nose is flattened, while the upper lip protrudes like those of the felidæ: in others, the nose is hooked and prominent as a parrot's beak.[1]



STUDY OF AN OLD MAN.
(Trivulzi Library.)

[1] A thoughtful enquirer, himself an authority on the art of caricature, has left us a definition of what he calls the anatomy of ugliness that I may offer to the attention of my reader. Leonardo, said Champfleury, "was of the race of those who have sought to demonstrate the gradual transitions which lead from the Apollo to the frog. He concerned himself both with the traits that divide man from brute, and those which connect them. Occupied with such a train of thought, Leonardo must often have pondered the order of primal organisms. He inclined perhaps to the ideas of the

But here again we may ask, was Leonardo a realist, or did he distort nature by dwelling exclusively on exceptions? Realism, as we understand it in our own times, is either platitude or an exclusive preoccupation with what is ugly. From this grovelling point of view, proud, free spirits such as Leonardo can never be realists. Has not the master shown us by his example that art must be either subjective or non-existent? Take any one of his heads of old men: even when he seems to be giving himself up to the work of mechanical reproduction, he eliminates, perhaps unconsciously, everything opposed to the type that rises before his imagination, interposing between his eyes and the model. He ends by giving us, not a photographically faithful image of some individual, but an ideal of his own, which has incorporated itself in some face, seen, perhaps, by chance. Under his pencil this face is unwittingly transformed, and in a moment its personality is exchanged for one the artist has evolved from dreams.



HEAD OF A WOMAN. FROM AN ENGRAVING ASCRIBED TO LEONARDO.
(British Museum.)

Darwins of his day. Yet Leonardo seems to have studied only the exterior physiognomy of beings; his pencil does not penetrate beyond this. But he wished to create, and even to overstep Nature; in all branches of knowledge, his love of research was very strongly developed, and he inquired into the greater in order to obtain the less. His sheets of sketches must be looked upon as jottings purposely exaggerated, a teratological system carried to an extreme, a *jeu d'esprit* akin to those of Bacon, when he amused himself by turning rhetorician, and arguing the *pros* and *cons* of a question." (*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1879, vol. i., p. 201.)

These grotesque drawings, which were a mere accident in Leonardo's art, an accident I do not hesitate to call regrettable, became the favourite food of vulgar taste among a certain class of amateurs. They were eagerly sought after by collectors, and, what was worse, were laboriously copied and imitated by many artists. Hence the frequency with which they occur in various European collections.

By this creation of the æsthetics of ugliness side by side with a sublime formula of beauty, Leonardo showed the way on a path of extreme danger.

Towards the close of his sojourn in Milan, the master drew up a list of his drawings on one of the sheets of that *Codex Atlanticus* which is, so to speak, the Palladium of the Ambrosiana Library. I will transcribe this document, for in spite of its curiously laconic nature, it gives evidence of the singular catholicity of Leonardo's studies, and at the same time, it allows us to plunge into some of the mysterious recesses of his mind: "A head full face, of a young man, with fine flowing hair. Many flowers drawn from nature. A head, full face, with curly hair. Certain figures of S. Jerome. The measurements of a figure. Drawings of furnaces. A head of the Duke. Many designs for knots. Four studies for the panel of S. Angelo. A small composition of Girolamo da Fegline. A head of Christ done with the pen. Eight S. Sebastians. Several compositions of angels. A chalcedony [probably an antique cameo]. A head in profile with fine hair. Some pitchers seen in (?) perspective. Some machines for ships. Some machines for water-works. A head of Atalante [Atalante da Migliorotti ?], looking up. The head of Girolamo da Fegline. The head of Gian Francisco Borso. Several throats of old women. Several heads of old men. Several nude figures, complete. Several arms, eyes, feet, and positions. A Madonna, finished. Another, nearly in profile. Head of Our Lady ascending into Heaven. A head of an old man with a long chin. A head of a gipsy girl. A head with a hat on. A representation of the Passion, a cast. A head of a girl with her hair gathered in a knot. A head with the brown hair dressed."[1]

Did Leonardo make any essays in engraving? We may affirm at

[1] Richter, vol. i., pp. 355–356.

least that, like Dürer, Holbein, Jean Cousin, and other masters, he never himself engraved on wood. This fact has been definitely established by the Marchese d'Adda.[1] In the dedication of the *Trattato della Divina Proportione*, Leonardo's friend Pacioli certainly declares that he asked the latter to engrave the "schemata" for the treatise. "Schemata Vincii nostri Leonardo manibus scalpta." But a little farther on he adds, in referring to the base of a column (ch. vi. fol. 28 v°): ". . . . As you may see in the disposition of the regular bodies and others which you will find further on, done by Leonardo da Vinci, the excellent painter, architect, and musician, a man gifted with all the virtues, at the time when we were in the town of Milan, in the service of the very excellent Duke Lodovico Sforza Anglo, between the years 1496 and 1499. At this period we left the city together, in consequence of events, and went to settle in Florence. At Milan, I had with my own hands illuminated and ornamented these drawings, to the number of sixty, to insert them in the copy destined for the Duke[2] and also in two others, one for Galeazzo San Severino of Milan; the other, for the most excellent Piero Soderini, Gonfaloniere of Florence, in whose palace he is at present, etc. . . ." It is evident, says the Marchese d'Adda, that Pacioli refers to Leonardo's share in the preparation of the manuscript; and that he had never heard of the woodcuts for the volume, which was not printed at Venice till 1509, long after the two friends had quitted Milan.

Gilberto Govi goes even further. He affirms that Pacioli kept Leonardo's original drawings for himself, and made tracings from them for the three manuscript copies. It is certain, at any rate, that the *Codex Atlanticus* contains sketches of many geometrical figures for Pacioli's work.[3]

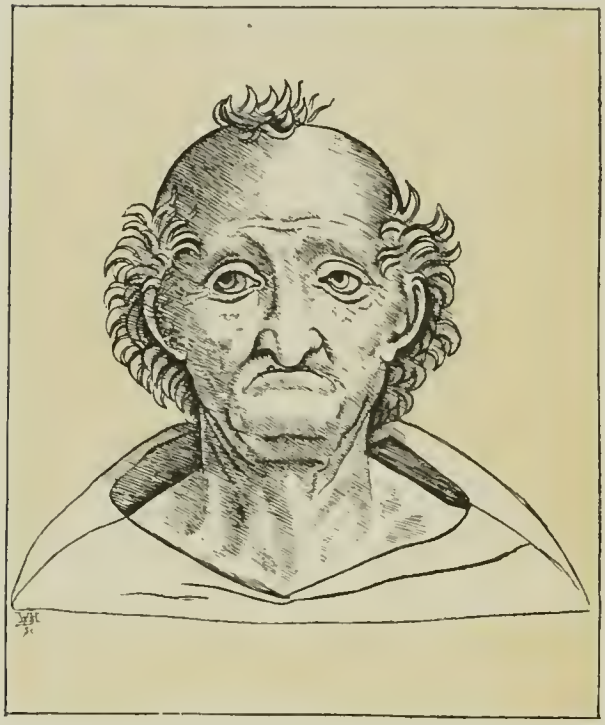
[1] *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1868, vol. ii., p. 130, *et seq.*

[2] This copy is in the Geneva Library. Although much injured by damp, it bears the true Leonardesque impress, says the Marchese d'Adda. In it, adds the learned Milanese iconophile, I saw the most unmistakable evidences of the master's influence, both in the geometrical figures and in the splendid miniature in which the author is represented offering his manuscript to Lodovico il Moro. The latter is evidently by the hand of Fra Antonio da Monza. (*Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1868, vol. ii., p. 133.)

[3] *Saggio*, p. 13.—Referring to the Leonardesque character certain critics have discovered in the two profile heads in Pacioli's work (fol. 25 of the first *Treatise*, and fol. 28

On the other hand, there are several engravings from copperplates which pass for the works of Leonardo da Vinci.[1]

In the British Museum, to begin with, there is a *Young Woman in Profile*, turning to the left. Rich tresses hang about her neck, and fall on her shoulders; a curl strays across her cheek. She wears a slashed bodice. An attempt has been made to connect this head with that of the *Mona Lisa*. But it is entirely wanting in the flexibility so characteristic of *La Gioconda*, and the features have a curiously bewildered expression.



STUDY OF A HEAD. FACSIMILE OF AN ENGRAVING AFTER LEONARDO.

A second example is also in the British Museum, a *Young Woman in Profile* turned to the right, crowned with ivy, with the inscription AGHA LE. VI. The type here has more distinction, and the handling more flexibility.

A third, the only known example of which belongs to the same collection, *The Four Horsemen*, is certainly from a drawing by Leonardo, though it is impossible to say whether the plate was actually engraved by him.[2]

of the second), the Marchese d'Adda points out that these were borrowed from a work by Piero della Francesca, Pacioli's master and fellow citizen.

[1] D'Adda, *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1868, vol. ii., p. 139 *et seq.*—Passavant, *Le Peintre-Graveur*, vol. v., p. 181.—Delaborde, *La Gravure en Italie avant Marc Antonie*, p. 183. —A drawing in the Vallardi Collection (no. 1), a woman in profile to the right, has much in common with the two engravings. There is the same high chin, the same continuity of line in the forehead and nose, the same straight nose, the same astonished gaze.

[2] Richter, pl. lxv.—Other engravings ascribed to Leonardo are either spurious or doubtful. Passavant, *Le Peintre-Graveur*, vol. v., p. 180.

Six engravings are connected with the so-called "Academy of Leonardo." They bear the inscription *Academia Leonardi Vinci* in the midst of interlaced ornaments, cunningly composed, and forming a sort of labyrinth.[1]

Several heads of old men, long attributed to Mantegna, seem also to have been executed in the studio of the great head of the Milanese school.[1]



STUDIES FOR THE STATUE OF FRANCESCO SFORZA. FROM AN ENGRAVING ASCRIBED TO LEONARDO.

(British Museum.)

The equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, and the *Last Supper* represent but a small proportion of Leonardo's almost miraculous activity during sixteen or seventeen years of extraordinary fecundity and strenuous toil. We have still to consider his work as an architect, an engineer, a mechanician, a naturalist, a philosopher, and finally, his labours as a teacher in the Academy to which he gave his name.

The Sforza monument, unfinished though it was, had immediately given Leonardo a place in the front rank of sculptors, just as the *Last Supper* had raised him to the highest place among painters. Taking into account the scope and variety of his knowledge in the exact sciences, it was natural that the artist should have burned to try his hand at

[1] See M. G. Duplessis' article in the *Revue Universelle des Arts*, 1862, vol. xv., pp. 157–158.

architecture. And, as a fact, problems of construction occupied him as much as problems of æsthetics ; hence we find him searching into the causes that produce fissures in walls and niches, inquiring into the nature of arches, &c. The acoustics of church buildings also occupied him a good deal ; he tried to discover an architectural combination which would enable the preacher's voice to reach the most distant corner of the building, and he invented the "teatro da predicare"—a lecture hall in the form of an amphitheatre. Among his designs there is also the plan of a town with a system of streets on two different levels for distinct services (Richter, pl. lxxvii., lxxviii).

An opportunity of coming to the front in this new domain soon presented itself. For years, the completion of Milan Cathedral had occupied the attention of all who were interested in Gothic architecture. The master-builders of Strasburg, as also Bramante, Francesco di Giorgio Martini, and many others, had given advice, and worked out plans. In 1487[1] Leonardo, too, entered the lists in this great competition, which stirred the enthusiasm of the last champions of the Middle Ages ; he turned his attention to the cupola which was to crown the transept, the "tiburium." But everything tends to prove that his design in the Gothic manner was rejected,[2] and henceforth the master's researches were purely platonic.

Leonardo eagerly accepted other works, apparently still more humble. On February 2, 1494, when at the Sforzesca, he made a design for a staircase of twenty-five steps, each two-thirds of a "braccia" high and eight "braccia" wide. On March 20 following, he went to Vigevano to examine the vines. It was perhaps on this occasion that he made a study of the staircase of a hundred and thirty steps in the mansion.

Although we cannot positively attribute any existing building to Leonardo, it is easy to divine from his sketches what his designs may or would have been in stone. They would first of all have revealed the sense of harmony that characterised this purist "par excellence," by the

[1] 1487. "Addi 8 agosto Magistro Leonardo Florentino, qui habet onus faciendi modellum unum tuboril ecclesiæ majoris, juxta ordinationem factam in Consilio fabricæ, super ratione faciendi dictum modellum." L. 56 (*Annali della Fabbrica del Duomo di Milano*, vol. iii., p. 38. Cf. Boito, *Il Duomo di Milano*, pp. 227–228.)

[2] Richter, vol. ii., pl. C.—Trivulzi MS., pl. xxxvii.

perfect equilibrium of the different parts of the edifice, attached to the central body by an absolutely organic and vital bond. Churches on a concentric plan, that is to say, with the lower aisles and chapels grouped as closely as possible round a central cupola which dominates the whole structure, on the system dear to the Byzantines, seem to have been preferred by the master. He sketched a great number in the sheets published by M. de Geymüller, grouping four, six, and even eight cupolas round the central dome. The pavilion he designed for the Duchess Beatrice d'Este's garden had also a domed vault. His masterpiece in the domain of circular architecture is a design, no less majestic than simple in conception, for a mausoleum (inspired, perhaps, by that at Halicarnassus, which still existed in part at the beginning of the fifteenth century). According to M. de Geymüller, this one design would have sufficed to rank Leonardo among the greatest architects of all time.[1]

As an architect, says the same authority, Leonardo was the direct descendant of Brunellesco. He recognised this himself by drawing the plan of San Spirito at Florence, sketching a lateral view of the church of San Lorenzo in the same city, and composing a plan almost identical with that of the famous Chapel of the Angels, three of Brunellesco's masterpieces. In his plans of churches he was clearly inspired by the dome and lantern of Santa Maria dei Fiori; and finally, it was from Brunellesco he borrowed the principle of double entablatures.[2] It is possible that the influence of another of his Florentine compatriots, the great Leone Battista Alberti, had little effect upon him till after his arrival in Milan, and that it worked upon him through the intermediary of Bramante, who proved himself in so many respects the successor and exponent of Alberti. But above all others, Bramante, in his classic rather than in his Lombard vein, made a deep impression on the master. Leonardo the architect, like Leonardo the sculptor, had dreams of colossal, almost chimeric works. The royal necropolis he planned (Richter, pl. xcviii) was to consist, according to M. de Geymüller's calculations, of an artificial mountain, 600 metres in diameter at the base, and of a circular temple, the pavement of which was

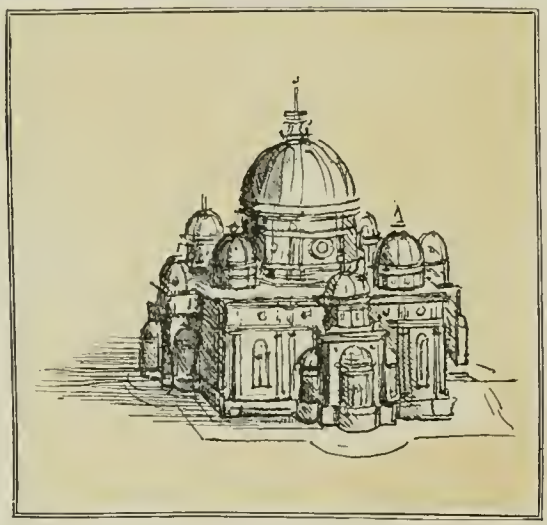
[1] M. de Geymüller's study is incorporated in Dr. Richter's work.

[2] Ch. Ravaisson-Mollien, vol. ii., fol. 67 v°.

to be on a level with the spires of Cologne Cathedral, while the interior was to be of the same width as the nave of S. Peter's at Rome. [1]

On another occasion, fired by the example of Aristotele di Fioravante, the famous Bolognese engineer, who had removed a tower from one place to another without demolishing it, he proposed to the Florentine government to raise the Baptistery by means of machinery, and replace it on a base of steps. Needless to say, the project was not favourably received. Here again the great artist and scholar showed himself a visionary.

[1] According to Signor Uzielli, it was in 1499 that Leonardo made a report on the causes that threatened the destruction of the church of San Salvatore al Monte. (*Ricerche*, 1st ed. vol. ii., p. 215–216.) G. Milanesi, however, gives 1506 as the date of this consultation. (Vasari, vol. iv.)



DESIGN FOR A CHURCH WITH A CENTRAL CUPOLA.

(Library of the Institut de France.)



MODELS OF WEAPONS, OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE.
(Valton Collection, Paris.)

CHAPTER VIII

LEONARDO'S ACADEMY—HIS WRITINGS ON ART—THE "TREATISE ON PAINTING"—FRA LUCA PACIOLI AND HIS TREATISE ON PROPORTION—LEONARDO'S "ATELIER" AND HIS TEACHING.



STUDY FOR "THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.
(British Museum.)

LEONARDO was not content to create, he burned with the desire to teach also. In order to act more strongly on those by whom he was surrounded, he founded the academy which bore his name. This was not, as we might be tempted to think, merely an academic body, devoted to the glorification of ability, nor even an institution for public teaching. In all probability, it was a free society, through which its members could obtain a more fruitful influence on each other and their neighbours, by discussion, by working together, and by general community of tastes and studies. All the documents we possess to throw light on this mysterious institution are half a dozen engravings with the words "Academia Leonardi Vinci"[1] in an interlaced ornament, and the

[1] Various hypotheses have been put forward to explain these "tondi," as they have been called from their circular shape. Leonardo, says Vasari, wasted a good deal of time in drawing festoons of cords—"gruppi di cordi"—in a pattern; one of these, a very beautiful and intricate example, was engraved. Modern writers have suggested that these

engraving of a woman's head, bearing the same inscription. And yet there can be no doubt about the influence this institution had upon the formation of the Milanese school, and even, I may add, upon the genesis of modern science.[1]

Leonardo's academy is usually pictured as one of those essentially solemn and formal societies which rose into vogue in the sixteenth century, and reached their full expansion in the seventeenth. Such an idea is anachronistic. The epoch with which we are now concerned

prints were intended to serve as entrance tickets to the sessions or courses of the Milanese Accademia, or that they were destined for "ex libris," to be pasted into the books belonging to the Academy library. The Marchese d'Adda explains them as models of linear ornament, for the use of the pupils of every kind who frequented the Academy, painters, miniaturists, goldsmiths, and even handicraftsmen. More recently, M. Charles Henry has suggested that they were demonstrations of the master's scientific æsthetics. (*Introduction à l'Esthétique scientifique*, Paris, 1885, p. 5.)

It is evident that this interlaced ornament is not of German origin, as Passavant declared it to be, though Dürer indeed copied it, for it recurs in Leonardo's manuscripts (*Codex Atlanticus*, fol. 548—Ravaisson-Mollien, vol. vi. MS., no. 2038 of the Bibliothèque Nationale, fol. 34 v°.), in the paintings of one of the small rooms in the castle at Milan (see p. 205), on the spandril of the vault in the sacristy of Santa Maria delle Grazie, also at Milan (Mongeri, *L'Arte a Milano*, p. 213), on the sleeves of the woman in the female portrait of the Ambrosiana, and on those of one of the horsemen in the *Battle of Anghiari*. M. Errera, Professor of the University of Brussels, suggests that the interlacements may have been an armorial rebus; the word "Vinci" means "enchained," and is the root of "vincoli" (bonds). Pacioli, however, plays on the word "Vinci," *i.e.*, who has vanquished, who can vanquish. Winterberg's ed., p. 32–33.

[1] In Uzielli's last edition (vol. i., p. 505), the very existence of Leonardo's academy, whether as a scientific or as an artistic body, is contested. According to Signor Uzielli, it was nothing more than a pious but unfulfilled aspiration. I cannot share his opinion. Do we not know, thanks to Luca Pacioli, that on February 9, 1498, at least, Lodovico organised a grand scientific tournament ("laudabile e scientifico duello") at the Castle of Milan in which prelates, generals, doctors, astrologers, and men of law, besides Leonardo himself, took part as combatants and spectators. It was there declared —"ces paroles douces comme le miel"—that nothing could be more meritorious in a man of talent than to communicate his gift to others (*Divina Proportione*. Cf. Müller-Walde: *Jahrbuch*, 1897, p. 115–118).—Another contemporary, the chronicler Corio, speaks of the elegant academy of Lodovico il Moro.

In one of his *Novelle*, Bandello describes the "salon" of Cecilia Gallerani, the favourite of Il Moro and the original of one of Leonardo's most famous portraits, and shows us soldiers, musicians, architects, philosophers, and poets grouped about her. Such "réunions" were in fact academies, and have been compared, reasonably enough, with that of which Leonardo was the instigator.

The organisation of the Milanese Academy would be of great interest for us, were it only to let us know how far the discoveries of Leonardo had a chance of propagation, and whether some among them may not have come to the knowledge of his immediate successors by direct oral tradition.

had still too much vitality and independence to be shut up in narrow formulæ. Putting aside the kingdom of Naples, where external distractions very early became a factor in the encouragement of art, science and literature, the Italy of the early Renaissance had only a few friendly, unofficial, and essentially informal societies to show. At the court of the Sforzi, especially, artists, poets and savants might look for glory and fortune, but not for official honours. Those titles of knighthood, which they were already beginning to earn at Rome and Naples, were not awarded elsewhere. The most that Il Moro did was to crown his favourite, Bellincioni, in public with the poet's bays, and to turn his physician, Gabriele Pirovano, who had cured him, into the Conte da Rosata.

It is generally agreed that the manuscripts left by Leonardo are fragments from the teaching he gave in his Milanese academy. We must therefore discuss, in some detail, a system of education nearly as vast as that of Pico della Mirandola, embracing as it did every branch of human knowledge, not excepting the occult sciences.

Before entering upon any discussion of those theoretical works in which Leonardo treats of painting, of proportion, and of other branches of art, it will be convenient to give a brief history of the manuscripts in which his observations have been preserved.

From about his thirty-seventh year, according to Dr. Richter, Leonardo made it a habit to write down the results of his observations, and continued that work till his death, thus fulfilling to the end that duty of activity which is incumbent on every human creature. Even now, after great and irreparable losses, his manuscripts and fragments of manuscripts reach a total of more than fifty, and form more than five thousand pages of text. Dr. Richter has attempted to classify them chronologically, an attempt in which we shall not follow him, for in most cases it rests on pure conjecture. More than once, indeed, he has been compelled to confess his inability to suggest even an approximate date.

As for Leonardo's peculiar habit of writing in Oriental fashion, from right to left, it may be well to say now what has to be said about it. We know from the Uffizi drawing reproduced on p. 29, that he began the practice as early as 1473. He was faithful to it to the end

of his life, and that on no capricious impulse. Various pieces of evidence combine to show that it was only one among several precautions taken against the pilfering of his secrets. He was in the habit, for instance, of writing certain words in the form of anagrams, "Amor" for "Roma," "Ilopan" for "Napoli."[1]

From the palæographic standpoint, the writing of Leonardo is still fifteenth century in its character, and in its smallness, its rigidity, and the shortness of its strokes above and below the line, differs essentially from the large and expressive writing of Michelangelo and Raphael.



ENGRAVING OF INTERLACED ORNAMENT INSCRIBED "ACADEMIA LEONARDI VINCI."

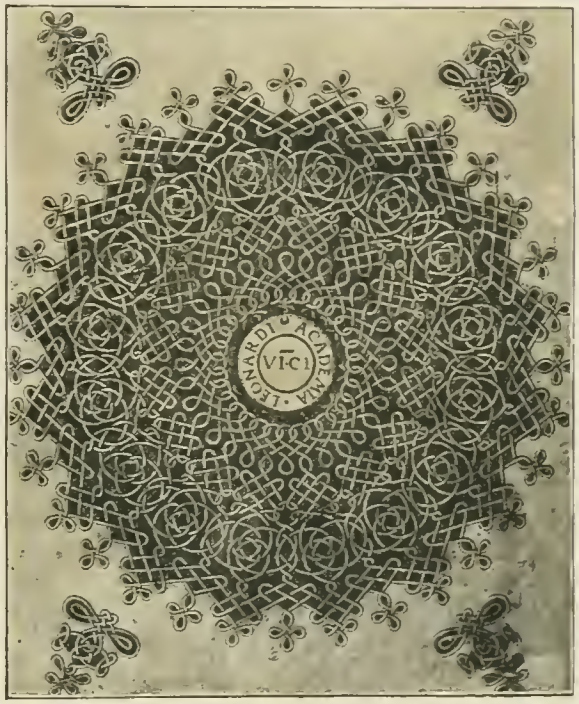
(The Ambrosiana, Milan.)

During the thirty-five years which separate the first manuscript from the last the writing undergoes no change whatever. The most we can do is to point to some slight difference between the characters used on the two early drawings of 1473 and 1478, and those which belong to his maturity or old age. M. Charles Ravaisson has remarked that in his first attempts, Leonardo takes pleasure in forming letters of some elaboration, which later on, he abandons for characters more suitable to a thinker and observer, who wishes to lose no time in recording his experiences. In 1478—adds M. Ravaisson—Leonardo is found experimenting with

[1] Here and there, at long intervals, we come upon a line written in the ordinary way (*Manuscrit* B at the Institut de France; Ravaisson-Mollien, *les Écrits de Léonard da Vinci*, p. 23). Some of Leonardo's contemporaries wrote from right to left, Sabba da Castiglione, for instance (Ravaisson, *Les Manuscrits*, vol. i., p. 2), and the sculptor, Raf. da Montelupo, who wrote "all' ebraica" (Gaye, *Carteggio*, vol. iii., p. 582–3).

a sign resembling the beginning of a loop to take the place of *n*; later on, he nearly always reduces it to the simple stroke in common use.[1]

It is difficult to imagine a spontaneous genius, a genius like Donatello, for instance, sitting down to write about art, to dissect and account for his impressions, and to formulate receipts for his pupils. Reasoning is supposed to be inconsistent with spontaneity of inspiration! But without going very far for instances, can we not point, even in the Florence of the fifteenth century, to more than one eminent creator who took up the pen for didactic purposes, to Leone Battista Alberti, to Ghiberti, to Ghirlandajo, to Verrocchio? At Milan, Bramante, the rival and colleague of Leonardo, composed several treatises, now unhappily lost; so, too, did Zenale. Leonardo, then, had the authority of many illustrious examples for his attempt to combine the honours of the theorist with the glory of the creative artist. And yet what a singular contradiction he presents! This man, whose work is one long, consistent protest against formulæ, against teaching, against tradition, pretends to instruct others in the treating of a subject according to set and determined rules! Did the anomaly even strike him? If you, my artist reader, have not in your own imagination the force necessary to show you the attitudes and gestures of a man desperate, or transported by rage, do you think



ENGRAVING INTERLACED ORNAMENT INSCRIBED "ACADEMIA LEONARDI VINCI."
(The Ambrosiana, Milan.)

[1] Ch. Ravaisson-Mollien, *Les Manuscrits*, vol. v., p. 1.

your brush will ever succeed in depicting such a person by the help of a book? How thoroughly the precept of the old Latin author, "si vis me flere," applies in such a case! You may say that Leonardo wrote for second-rate artists; to which I answer that, from the artistic standpoint, such people do not exist, and that it was unworthy of Leonardo's genius to trouble itself about them.

Like the other works of Leonardo, the *Trattato della Pittura* awaits the editor. It has not yet undergone the remodelling and co-ordination required to make it a real didactic treatise. The want of sequence in the arrangement of its chapters, and the innumerable repetitions show that it never received the master's last touches. Let us add that, imperfect as it is, it has never ceased, since it was first made public, to excite the keen interest of the artist and the amateur. Between 1651, when it was first sent to the press, and 1898, nearly thirty editions and translations have been published.



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

The treatise has come down to us in two different forms. In the first place, we have the autographic fragments, illustrated by numerous drawings of the master, which Dr. Richter was the first to publish; secondly, we have several old copies, more complete in some respects than the fragments; in these we can recognise an effort at re-arrangement due, no doubt, to one or another of his disciples, if not to Leonardo himself.

Of these the two most important copies are in the Barberini Palace and the Vatican. Upon the former were based the early printed editions, especially that of 1651, which contained illustrations by Nicholas Poussin.[1] The Vatican manuscript was published by Manzi

[1] It is now asserted that some of the figures hitherto ascribed to Poussin are copies by the French master of drawings by Leonardo himself. As to this, a comparison between them and the copies made by Rubens, or one of his pupils, from the same originals ought to be decisive. (Pawlowski, in *Pierre-Paul Rubens*, p. 227–233, Librairie de l'Art; De Geymüller, *Les derniers Travaux sur Léonard de Vinci*, p. 34, 36). But—"pace" these

in 1817. It is much more complete than the Barberini codex, for it contains books i., v., vi., vii. and viii,, all wanting in the latter. As the name of Melzi occurs in three separate passages, it has been supposed that he had something to do with the production or arrangement of the Vatican codex. But that of course is only a more or less probable hypothesis.



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA." (Vatican Library.)

We must add that beyond the diagrams of perspective and the drawings of trees, the Vatican MS. contains but a small number of sketches: the series of noses, a few anatomical sketches and studies of movement, a horse walking, &c. The nude figure, front and back (plate ix., no. 16, in the Manzi edition) is a reproduction from two of the Windsor drawings.

Manzi allowed himself various libertie swith Leonardo. Not content with much arbitrary modification of his author's orthography, he left out paragraphs and even whole chapters, and so it became necessary to prepare a definitive edition, a task brought to a happy conclusion by the late Heinrich Ludwig (died 1898), a German painter, settled in Rome. The German translation facing the text in Ludwig's edition shows a scrupulous fidelity, also evident in the commentaries, of which the third volume is made up. Ludwig followed up his edition of the *Trattato* with a special volume (1885), in which the differences and analogies between the original manuscripts of Leonardo, and the

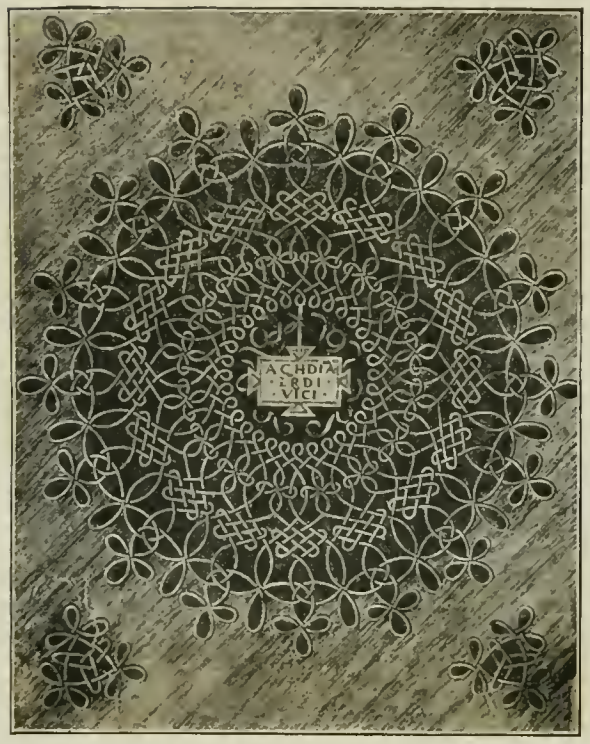
respectable authorities—could there be anything more out of harmony with Leonardo's manner than heavy, common figures iike these?

After taking, by his drawings, an active part in the publication of the *Trattato*, Poussin renounced his convictions, and finally wrote the following letter to Abraham Bosse: "As for Leonardo's book, it is true that I drew the human figures in the copy which belongs to M. le Chevalier du Puis (del Pozzo); but the rest of the drawings, geometrical or otherwise, are by a certain degli Alberti, the same who did the "plantes" (plates or plans?) in the book of subterranean Rome. As for the landscapes ("gaufes paisages") which are behind the figures in the copy printed by M. de Chambray, they were added by one Errard [Charles Errard, first director of the French Academy in Rome], without my knowledge. All that is good in this book might be written on a single sheet of paper, and that in large letters, and those who think I approve of all that is in it do not know me, me who profess never to give free course to things relating to my calling which are ill-said or ill-done." (De Chennevières-Pointel, *Recherches sur la Vie et les Ouvrages de quelques Peintres provinciaux*, vol. iii., p. 166.)

Vatican codex, are carefully set out. Unfortunately this volume is disfigured by a great deal of coarse and unfair abuse of Dr. Richter.

As a result of Ludwig's researches we find that the fragments of the *Trattato* printed by Dr. Richter form 662 paragraphs, while the Vatican MS. runs to 944. The text of 225 paragraphs is identical both in the collected manuscripts and the Vatican copy.

This great encylopædia of painting contains eight books: i., On Poetry and Painting; ii., On Precepts for the Painter; iii., On Anatomy, Proportions, &c.; iv., On Drapery; v., On Light and Shadow; vi., On Trees and Verdure; vii., On Clouds; viii., On the Horizon.



ENGRAVING OF INTERLACED ORNAMENT, INSCRIBED "ACADEMIA LEONARDI VINCI."

(The Ambrosiana, Milan.)

The major part of Book i is devoted to a comparison of painting with poetry . . . "Sicut pictura poesis" . . . "Painting is poetry which one can see, but cannot hear; poetry is painting which one can hear, but cannot see." "A picture is a mute poem, and a poem a blind picture" (c. 20, 21).[2] But Leonardo pushes his comparison too far

[1] There is, unhappily, no French translation in which artists and amateurs might note the numerous and important additions to the *Trattato* contained in the autographs and in the Vatican codex. In France we have still perforce to content ourselves with Gault de Saint-Germain's very incomplete version. This reproach, is, I am glad to hear, in the way of being shortly removed by M. Rouveyre, who has done so much for students of Leonardo.

[2] In Lodovico Dolce's *Aretino*, Pietro Aretino reminds us that certain men of talent have called the painter a mute poet, and the poet a talking painter.

when he declares that poetry is supremely suitable for the deaf! (cap. 28).

The arguments used by Leonardo in favour of painting offer a certain analogy with those set forth about the same time by Baldassare Castiglione, in the *Cortegiano*. I mean that occasionally they have a somewhat prosaic quality, rather than one of high philosophical speculation. Hear what he says on the question of visual illusion. "I have seen a portrait so like that the favourite dog of the original took it for his master and displayed every sign of delight; I have also seen dogs bark at painted dogs and try to bite them; and a monkey make all sorts of faces at portraits of his own kind; I have seen swallows on the wing attempt to settle on iron bars painted across the painted windows of painted houses" (cap. 14).



HEAD OF AN OLD MAN CROWNED WITH LAUREL.

(Windsor Library.)

In another section (13) Leonardo brings out the omnipotence of the painter. When he wants to see such beauties as excite his love, he can create them for himself; if he should wish to see monstrous and terrific things, or absurd and laughable things, or things which excite compassion, again he is sovereign and divine ("n' è signore e dio"); he can create countries teeming with population, or deserts, places dark and shady with trees, or blazing with the sun, &c.

These transcendental considerations are followed up by comparisons between painting and music, painting and sculpture.

The more or less idle question, whether painting was superior to sculpture, or "vice versa," was passionately discussed all through the Renaissance. Half a century, at least, before Leonardo, Leone Battista Alberti had pronounced in favour of painting.[1]



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library)

Leonardo accords the palm to the same art. "Sculpture," he says, "is not a science, but a mechanical art, if there is one, for it makes the sculptor sweat, and gives him bodily fatigue. The only difference I find between painting and sculpture is this: the sculptor carries out his works with more bodily fatigue than the painter, the painter with more mental fatigue than the sculptor" (cap. 35, 36).

About the same time, perhaps, as Leonardo, Baldassare Castiglione arrived at a similar conclusion in his *Cortegiano*.

A decade or two later, in 1549, a distinguished Florentine man of letters, Benedetto Varchi, published a *Lezione*, in which the question *Quale sia più nobile arte, la Scultura o la Pittura*, was discussed. Michelangelo wrote him a letter in which he makes a determined stand for his favourite art: "I say that the nearer painting approaches to the round, the better it seems to me, and the nearer the round approaches to painting the worse it seems. To me, sculpture appears the lamp of painting; between the one and the

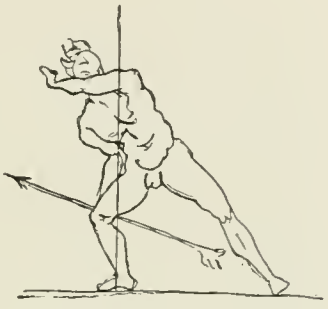


SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library).

[1] "And truly," he cries, "is she not the queen and chief ornament of the arts. If I am not in error, it was from the painter that the architect took his architraves, his capitals, his bases, his columns, his pinnacles, and other adornments of his buildings. It is evidently on the principles of the painter's art that the lapidary, the sculptor, the jeweller, and other manual artists regulate their practice; in short, there is no art, however humble, which has not some connection with painting." (*Della Pittura.*)—Other points of sympathy between the treatises of Leonardo and Alberti have been established by Seibt., *Hell-Dunkel* (pp. 37, 38, 53). Both Alberti and Leonardo declare that black and white are not colours, that vigour of relief is preferable to beauty of colour, etc. See also C. Brun's paper in the *Repertorium für Künstwissenschaft*, 1892, p. 267.

other there is the same difference as between the sun and the moon."[1]

It was long before the dispute ceased to set artists and critics by the ears. Vasari, Bronzino, Pontormo, Tribolo, and a crowd of others, Aretino[2] included, took part in the fight. After the death of Michelangelo, who had ended by condemning the whole sterile discussion, the question of precedence was settled in favour of the painters, which brought Cellini into the lists to break a lance for sculpture.[3] In the time of Voltaire the discussion was renewed by the sculptor Falconet;[4] "*adhuc sub judice lis est.*"



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

Leonardo distrusted inspiration. He thought it necessary to control and corroborate it by a criticism which never slept, a criticism exercised both by the artist himself and by strangers. So he begins with a series of precepts calculated to give the painter the greatest possible independence, and to make him an impartial and, as it were, outside judge of his own productions. "We know, as a fact, that one sees the faults of others more quickly than one's own; we even go so far as to blame small errors in our neighbours when we ourselves possess them in a still greater degree. To escape this ignorance, master perspective first of all, and then learn thoroughly the measurements of men and animals; become also a good architect, at least so far as the general forms of buildings, and of other things which stand upon the earth are concerned. These forms are, in fact, infinite. The more various your knowledge is, the more will your work be praised. Do not disdain to copy slavishly from nature those details with which you are not familiar."



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

"To come back," he adds, "to the point from which we started, I

[1] *Lettere*, Milanesi's edition, p. 522. [2] See P. Gauthiez, *L'Aretin*, p. 261.
[3] *I Trattati dell' Oreficeria*, Milanesi's edition, p. xx.–xxxiv., 229, 233, 321, 331.
[4] See François Benoit: *Quas opiniones et quas controversias Falconet de arte habuerit.* Paris, 1897, p. 11–12.

tell you that you should always have beside you a flat mirror, and should look continually at the reflection in it of your work. Being reversed, the image will appeal to you as if it were done by some one else. By this means you will discover your faults much more readily. It will also be useful to leave off work pretty often and amuse yourself with something else. When you go back you will judge what you have done more fairly, for too much application lays you open to mistakes. Again, it is good to look at your work from a distance, for it then appears smaller and can be more easily embraced as a whole by the eye, which will recognise discords, faults of proportion in limbs, and bad quantities in the colours more easily than when close at hand" (cap. 407).



HEAD OF AN OLD MAN.
(Windsor Library.)

In his discussion of the weight to be given to remarks made by others, Leonardo, I should think, does some little violence to his own convictions. Seeing how he worked himself, it is pretty safe to assert that he laid very little store indeed by the advice of his colleagues, whether they were professional artists or amateurs. Did he not know more of the secrets of art than the whole of them put together? The most he did was to ask, now and then, for some little technical guidance, as, for instance, when he took the advice of Giuliano da San Gallo on the process of casting in metal.

However this may be, this is what he actually says on the function of criticism: "As a painter should be desirous of hearing what others think of his work, he should not repulse an external opinion while he is painting. For we can see clearly that even a man who is not

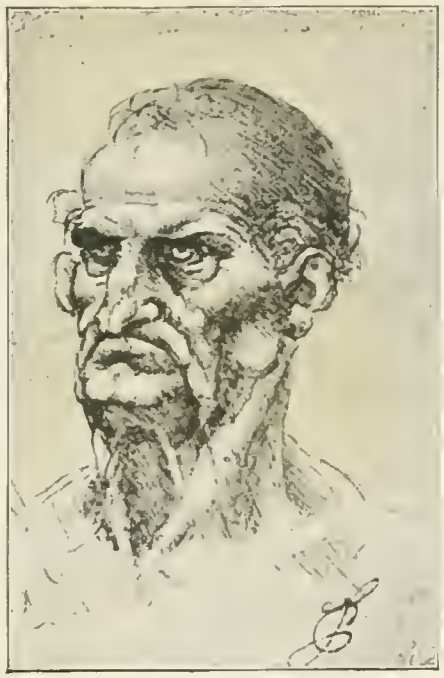
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A Study of Draperies.



Printed by Draeger, Paris.

a painter knows how another man is shaped, and can see whether the latter has a humped back, or one shoulder higher than the other, or a nose and mouth too large, or any other natural defect. If we admit that men are able to discern the mistakes of nature, still more must we allow that they can see our faults. We know how a man may deceive himself about his own works. If you cannot convince yourself of this by examining your own productions, look at those of your neighbours, and you will be convinced and profit by their mistakes" (cap. 75). "If you wish to escape the fault-finding with which painters visit any one who, in this or that branch of art, does not agree with their own way of seeing things, you must familiarise yourself with the different parts of art, so as to conform in each to the judgments provoked by works of painting. These different parts will be treated of below" (cap. 114).



HEAD OF AN OLD MAN.
(The Louvre.)

Farther on Leonardo points out, apparently with regret, the essentially subjective nature of the painter's "rôle." Two centuries and a half before Buffon, he shows the close relation between a man's character and his artistic style. "On the great defect of painters.—It is a great defect with artists to repeat the same movements, faces, and draperies in one and the same composition, and to give to most countenances the features of the author himself. I have often felt surprise at this, for I have known many artists who, in their figures, seem to have portrayed themselves, so that their own attitudes and gestures have been reproduced in the population of their pictures. If a painter is quick and vivacious in gesture and language, his figures have an equal vivacity. If he is pious, his figures, with their drooped

heads, seem pious too. If he is indolent, his figures are laziness personified. If he lacks proportion, his figures are also badly built. Finally, if he is mad, the state of his mind is reflected in his work, which lacks cohesion and reality; his personages look about, like people in a dream. And so all the distinctive features of the pictures are regulated by its author's character. . . .' (cap. 108; cf. cap. 186).



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

Elsewhere again he denies and condemns realism: "Among those whose profession it is to paint portraits, the men who make the best likenesses are the least effectual when the composition of a historical picture is in question" (cap. 58).

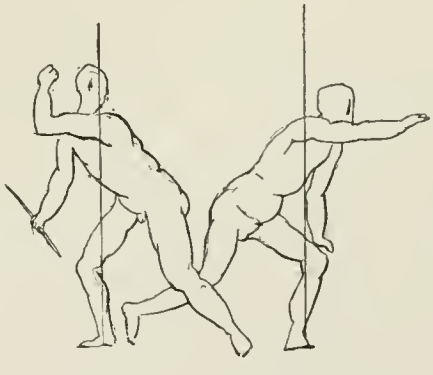
The painter of the *Last Supper* allows his spiritual tendencies to break out in the following paragraph, with its original conclusion: "A good painter should paint two things, man and the thoughts of man's soul. The first is an easy, the second a difficult, task, because the movements of the soul have to be expressed through movements and gestures of the limbs. To this end one should study deaf mutes, for their gestures are more expressive and important than those of other men" (cap. 180).

Eclectic principles are clearly formulated in the following precepts: "On the choice of beautiful faces.—The painter who gives beauty to his countenances seems to me to betray the possession of an uncommon gift of grace. He who does not possess it naturally may acquire it by a series of accidental observations, thus: watch carefully and choose what is good from a crowd of handsome faces, of faces, I mean, which seem handsome to the generality of men rather than those which please yourself, for you might in the latter case deceive yourself by selecting faces which offered analogies with your own. We are, as a fact, often seduced into error by these analogies, and, being ugly ourselves, choose faces which are not handsome, and so reproduce ugliness instead of beauty. Many painters do this. Faces, in fact, are apt to resemble those who make them. Select beauties, then, as I tell you, and engrave them on your minds" (cap. 137).

An echo from the teachings of the old Florentine school—I had nearly said the School of Salerno—and among other things of the *Treatise on Painting* of Cennino Cennini, may be perceived in the advice given by Leonardo to his pupils on matters of morality and hygiene—just as strongly as he recommends a gregarious study of drawing (cap. 71), so does he preach solitude when it is a question of thinking out and composing a work of art (cap. 50, 58). Contempt of money is another of his principles (cap. 64). In short, no artist has ever conceived a higher idea of the dignity of art than he.

He is often preoccupied with laws of contrast. He shows that the juxtaposition of beauty and ugliness heightens the effect of each (cap. 130, 187). He discourages, nevertheless, the mingling of melancholy people with cheerful ones; for, he adds, the law of nature is that we shall weep with those who weep and laugh with those who laugh, so laughter must be separated from tears (cap. 185). It seems to him equally tasteless to mix up children with old people (cap. 378, 379).

Long before Charles Le Brun, Leonardo busied himself with the expression of the passions. Several chapters of the *Treatise* are devoted to this interesting problem. One (cap. 255) tells us how to represent anger, another (cap. 257) treats of the movements made when laughing and weeping, and describes their difference. Elsewhere (cap. 256) he asks himself how despair is to be painted, and arrives at the following conclusions: "A desperate man may be represented holding a knife with which he stabs himself, after having torn his clothes and pulled out his hair. He should stand up, with the feet apart, the legs slightly bent, the body bowed and about to fall, and with his other hand he should tear open and enlarge his wound."



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

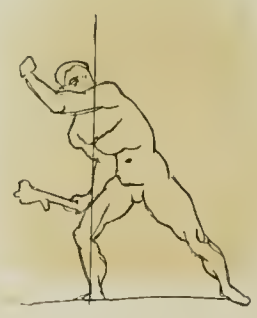
As a theoretical painter, he also insists on the necessity for studying human expression and gesture from actual life, and not from models more or less trained to its display. "After mastering the

movements of the limbs, the joints, and the trunk, the movements of men and women require to be studied as a whole, and then we should, with the help of short notes consisting of a few symbols only, observe (and record) the attitudes men take in their excitement, and that without allowing them to see they are watched, for if they once suspect this, their minds will be occupied with the watcher, and they will abandon their previous violence and frankness of movement. Examples: two angry men disputing, each believing himself in the right; they move their eyebrows, their arms and other limbs with great vigour, in gestures suitable to their intentions and their words. You could not force them to such a display if you wished to do so, nor make them simulate either this violent anger or any other emotion—laughter, tears, agony, admiration, terror, and other sentiments of the kind. To observe all this, form the habit of carrying a small sketch-book, the pages prepared with bone powder, so that by the help of the silver-point you may set down rapid notes of movements, attitudes, and even the grouping of spectators. You will thus learn how to compose scenes. And when your book is full, lay it on one side and preserve it for future use. Then take another and employ it in the same way. . . ." (cap. 179).



MEASUREMENTS OF THE HUMAN HEAD.

(Library of the Institut de France.)



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."

(Vatican Library.)

An enemy — if there ever was one — of formulæ, the author of the *Trattato* yielded occasionally to the temptation to impose over-narrow rules on his disciples. This we may see from the advice he gives on the

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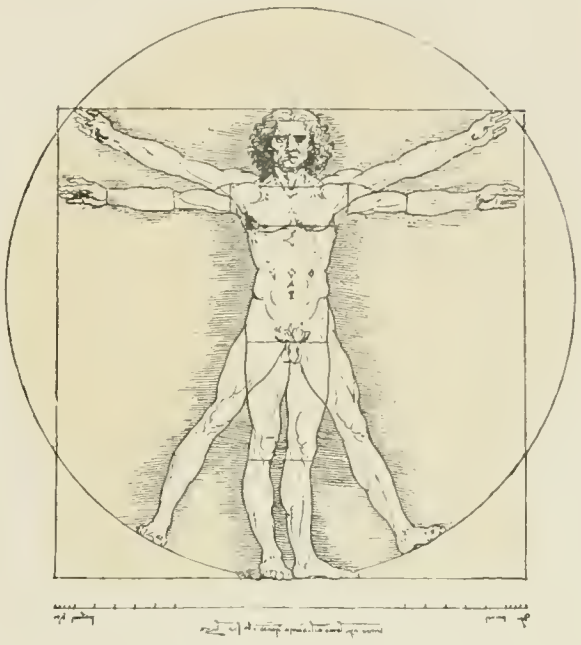
Portrait of an Old Man.

(BRITISH MUSEUM)



Printed by Draeger, Paris

question of how to represent the various ages. "Children of tender years should be represented in brusque and awkward movement when they are sitting down, but when standing their attitudes should be timid and anxious" (cap. 142). — "Old people should be slow and lethargic in movement; when they stand, their knees should be slightly bent, and their feet, set parallel to each other and at the same line across the toes, should be placed slightly apart; their bodies should be inclined forward, their heads bowed, and their arms not too far from their sides" (cap. 143).—"Women should be represented in modest attitudes, the legs together, the arms crossed, the head bowed.—Old women should be made to look bold and lively, with vehement gestures, like infernal furies. The movements of their heads and arms should be more vivacious than those of the legs" (cap. 144, 145).



MEASUREMENTS OF THE HUMAN BODY
(Accademia, Venice.)

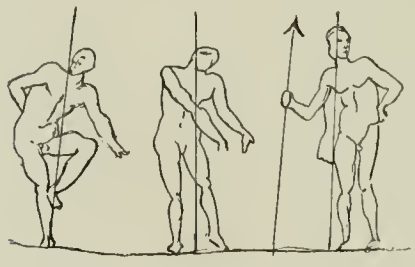


SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

He goes on to examine the changes brought about by age in the proportions of the different members (cap. 264, etc.).

It is surprising to find those iconographical formulæ which occupy so large a space in the Mount Athos *Treatise on Painting*, and in the *Rationale* of Guillaume Durand, entirely absent from the *Trattato*. Leonardo followed his fancy of the moment; he did not elaborate a programme, like Michelangelo or Raphael. He lacked the gravity, the conviction, the dramatic power, of his two

great rivals. We could not imagine him painting a *Crucifixion* or a *Last Judgment*. For him the history of Mary and of Jesus is no more than a pretext for exquisite idylls, in which he elaborates the joys of maternity and the innocence of childhood. The Old Testament is a closed book for him, with the single exception of the Deluge incident. This he treated in a fashion which betrayed the naturalist behind the artist. Once, and once only, did he treat a fundamental event in the history of Christianity, the institution of the Eucharist. It is unnecessary to add that he represented the *Last Supper of our Lord* with a dignity, breadth, and eloquence, which have made the great work in Santa Maria delle Grazie the highest and most perfect rendering of this cardinal event.



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

Although iconography, and literary elements generally, hold so low a place in the *Trattato della Pittura*, its author aspired to instil new life into allegory. While accepting certain traditional attributes, he set himself to create a new symbolism, and that a symbolism of so deep a subtlety that his own contemporaries could scarcely have understood it.[1] On one occasion he gives a receipt for the concoction of monsters ("un animal finto"). "No animal exists," he says, "whose limbs, taken separately, offer no resemblance to those of any other animal. If you wish to give a look of probability to an imaginary animal (say a serpent) give it the head of a mastiff or a setter, the eyes of a cat, the ears of a porcupine, the nose of a greyhound, the eyebrows of a lion, the temples of an old cock, and the neck of a tortoise" (cap. 421).[2]

Following close upon what we may call pictorial æsthetics, we find practical advice, technical recipes, and those secrets of practice which are discovered with so much labour and so easily lost. Here Leonardo

[1] See below, the chapters on Leonardo and the antique, and on Leonardo and the occult sciences. Also cf. my *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, vol. ii., p. 124.

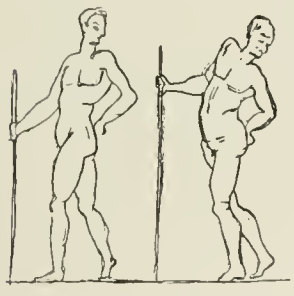
[2] A drawing in the Uffizi (Braun, no. 451) represents a dragon springing on a lion; in the background, two pen sketches of the Virgin holding the Child. The authenticity of this drawing seems to me doubtful.

gives proof of great experience and of an admirable fertility of resource. Whether it is a question of perspective, of colour, or of chiaroscuro, he generously pours out the discoveries of a long career of ardent investigation. As it is clearly impossible to summarise here many hundreds of paragraphs, rich both in facts and ideas, it must suffice to select a few passages which throw light on our hero's ingenuity and the extreme interest of his work.



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

In a most interesting paper, for which one of my own publications supplied the "à propos," M. Félix Ravaisson describes the methods of teaching recommended by Leonardo.[1] He advises that the hand should first be exercised in copying drawings by good masters; and then, after receiving the teacher's advice (it is Leonardo who speaks, and he clearly means "after the teacher has pronounced the pupil ready to take a further step") in drawing from good works in the round (cap. 63, 82). "In the first of these two passages," says M. Ravaisson, "Leonardo confines himself to recommending the pupil to draw, not from nature, but from good works of art, which will prepare him for the observation and comprehension of what nature has to give." In the second passage, he divides this first stage into two, and adds that the works to be copied at first should not be objects in relief, such as pieces of sculpture, but drawings, in which everything is translated into the flat. So, too, he recommends that the parts should be drawn separately before attempting the whole. "If you wish to mount to the top of a building, you must go up step by step, and so it is, I tell you frankly, with the art of drawing. If you wish really to understand the forms of things, you must begin with their



SKETCH IN THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library,)

[1] *Revue politique et littéraire*, 1887, p. 628.

parts, and must not go on to the second until you are master, both in mind and hand, of the first. If you do otherwise you lose your time, or at least, you prolong your period of study. Accuracy must be learnt before rapidity."

As Leonardo, in the *Trattato*, never wearies of asserting that the painter should be universal (cap. 52, 60, 61, 73, 78, 79), we have every right to believe that the teaching he gave was encyclopædic.



A SHEET OF SKETCHES.
(Bonnat Collection, Paris.)

No artist's eye has seen more profoundly than his into the mysteries of light; no artist's brain has more clearly formulated its rules. In him painter and optician were combined, as the result of innumerable experiments. Nothing escaped him—sunlight effects, rain effects, effects of mist and dust, variations of the atmosphere (book iii). He investigated the changes undergone by the tones of nature, by watching them through coloured glasses (cap. 254).

The book devoted to light and shadow is of peculiar subtlety. Only the eye of Leonardo could distinguish so many shades of difference. This we may see from the following paragraph. "There are three kinds of shadows. One kind is produced by a single point of light, such as the sun, the moon, or a flame. The second is produced by a door, a window, or other opening through which a large part of the sky can be seen. The third is produced by such a universal light

as the illumination of our hemisphere when the sun is not shining" (cap. 569).[1]

The teaching of perspective occupies a large section of the *Trattato.* Leonardo divides it into three kinds: "linear perspective (prospettiva liniale), the perspective of colours, and aërial perspective; otherwise called the diminution in the distinctness of bodies, the diminution of their size, and the diminution of their colour. The first has its origin in the eye, the two others in the veil of air interposed between the eye and the object."[2]



GROTESQUE FIGURE.
(Windsor Library.)

Long before Albert Dürer, to whom the invention of the *camera lucida* is usually ascribed, the Florentine master contrived an easy way of drawing figures in perspective with the help of a sheet of glass. He describes the process in the *Codex Atlanticus*, and in the *Trattato.*[3]

[1] Richter, vol. i., p. 16.—The laws of aërial perspective are very clearly laid down in cap. cclxii.

[2] Govi, *Saggio*, p. 13.—On Leonardo's studies in perspective, see Brockhaus, *De Sculpturâ, von Pomponius Gauricus*, p. 46–48.

[3] Leonardo's researches in chiaroscuro have been analysed by Seibt: *Hell-Dunkel*; Frankfort A.M., 1885, p. 33–53.

The author of the *Trattato* devoted much study to the preparation of pigments. Unfortunately, the results of his investigations in that direction have only reached us in a very fragmentary condition.

We have seen that fresco did not appeal to him. On the other hand, unlike Michelangelo, he was passionately attached to the oil medium. He was the first to win a full harmony and transparency of tone, and to obtain effects of chiaroscuro which even now, after four centuries have passed, still transport us with admiration. But these "tours de force" were dearly bought. The master demanded more from oil painting than it could give. He applied it indifferently to easel pictures and to monumental wall paintings. The *Last Supper*, the *Vierge aux Rochers*, the *Belle Ferronière*, and the *Mona Lisa* are all in a sad state ; such as are not blackened are covered with cracks.

In this respect Leonardo's influence worked nothing but harm. His imitator Raphael, who followed the excellent and far-seeing practice of the Umbrians in his early work, relaxed such wise precautions more and more towards the end of his career. Lamp-black, which he used so recklessly, especially in the Louvre *St. Michael*, did as much damage as bitumen has had to answer for in our own day. Among the Venetians—who, by the way, contrary to usual belief, practised tempera concurrently with oil-painting, there are many canvases, especially those of Tintoretto, which look like vast slabs of ink. And how many victims the same deplorable practice has made even in our own century!

In the researches carried on by Leonardo in his "rôle" as an artist and chemist in combination, the archæologist also finds an opportunity. We shall see, in the chapter devoted to the *Battle of Anghiari*, that the master, making use of a passage in Pliny, endeavours to recover the secret of painting in encaustic. Nothing came of it. His attempts failed, and greatly discouraged, he never carried his work beyond the sketch.

As precursor of Correggio and the Dutchmen, Leonardo pointed out how night effects should be managed. "Do you want to paint a night scene ? Represent a great fire, and give to the objects nearest to it the same colour as the fire ; the nearer one thing is to another, the more it participates in its colour" (cap. 146).

Landscape filled a large place in the thoughts of Leonardo. His oldest-dated drawing—an Alpine view—bears witness to the efforts he made in that direction, even in his youth! In the *Trattato* he often reverts to the subject. According to him, landscapes should be so represented that the trees are half in light, half in shadow, but the best way is to paint them when the sun is hidden by clouds, so that the trees may be illuminated by the general light of the sky, and shadowed by the universal shadow of the earth. "And these," he adds, "will be most obscure in the parts nearest to the centre of the tree, and to the earth."[1]

His studies of the proportions and movements of the human figure were intended to complete the *Trattato*. For the most part these researches were carried out between the years 1489 and 1498. At this latter date, Pacioli notes the completion of Leonardo's work in the dedication to his own *De divina Proportione* ("Leonardo da Vinci havenda già con tutta diligentia al degno libro de pictura e movimento humani posto fine[2]").

Naturally enough, Leonardo made use of the labours of his Greek and Roman predecessors. But on one occasion of his taking count of antique opinions he was ill-inspired. Basing himself on Vitruvius, he adopted eight heads, or ten faces, as the normal height of the human figure (cap. 264, etc.). Now this calculation is false. Modern science has proved that the normal height equals seven and a half heads, or, at most, seven and three quarters. As for the head itself, he divided it into 248,832 (?) parts, 12 grades, subdivided into 12 "punti," 12 "aminuti," 12 "minimi," and 12 "semi-minimi."[3]

All these studies of proportion have come down to us, partly in the manuscripts of Leonardo himself, partly in the echoes of his ideas to be found in Pacioli's treatise, *De divina Proportione*.

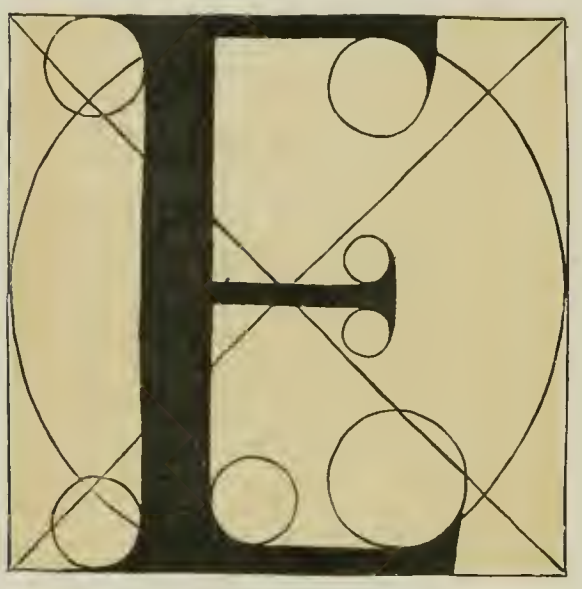
[1] Manuscript G, folio 19.

[2] Leonardo commenced the book entitled *De Figura umana* on April 2, 1489 (Richter, vol. ii., p. 415).—Zeising gives a very short *résumé* of Leonardo's theory of proportions in his *Neue Lehre von den Proportionen des menschlichen Körpers* (Leipzig, 1854, p. 50).

[3] One might be tempted to believe that the engravings of Fra Giocondo (*M. Vitruvius per Jocundum*, 1511), and of Cesare Cesariano (*Di Lucio Vitruvio Pollione de Architectura Libri decem*; Como, 1521, fol. L), were taken from Leonardo's drawing of a man standing in a circle with outstretched arms and legs. It was not so. The engravings in question proceed naturally and inevitably from the text of Vitruvius.

A few words, before going farther, on this very common-place satellite of the great Leonardo.

Luca Pacioli was born at Borgo San Sepolcro in 1450; he was therefore two years older than da Vinci. A compatriot of Piero della Francesca, he began, like him, with the study of mathematics, and pushed his admiration of his teacher and fellow townsman so far as to appropriate Piero's *Tractatus de quinque Corporibus*.[1] Entering the Franciscan order, he lived sometimes in Rome, where he enjoyed the hospitality of L. B. Alberti, sometimes at Perugia, where from 1477 to 1480, and from 1487 to 1481, he filled the chair of mathematics in the University. He also appeared now and then at Naples, at Florence, at Padua, at Assisi, and at Urbino.[2]



MODEL OF LETTER COMPOSED BY LEONARDO FOR THE TREATISE "DE DIVINA PROPORTIONE."

His *Summa de Arithmetica* appeared at Venice in 1494, with a dedication to Guidobaldo of Urbino.[3] Here Pacioli betrays himself as the most insipid of bookmakers, as well as a gossip and general blunderer.[4] His Latin is barbarous and his

[1] The fact of these borrowings has been established by Hubert Janitschek in the *Kunstchronik* of 1878 (no. 42), and by Jordan in the *Jahrbuch* for 1880, vol. i., p. 112–118. See also Winterberg and Uzielli (second edition, vol. i., p. 451). We must not forget, however, that Pacioli, far from concealing his indebtedness to Piero, proclaims it with enthusiasm: "E anco con quello prometto darve piena notitia de prospectiva medianti li documenti del nostro conterraneo et contemporale di tal facolta ali tempi nostri Monarca Maestro Petro de Franceschi, di la qual già feci dignissimo compendio e per noi ben apreso. E del suo caro quanto fratello Maestro Lorenzo Canozo da Lendenara." (Winterberg's edition, p. 123.)

[2] Uzielli, 2nd edition, vol. i., pp. 388 *et seq.*

[3] See Narducci, *Intorno a due Edizioni della Summa de Arithmetica di Fra Luca Pacioli*, Rome, 1863.

[4] His last biographer, M. Uzielli, nevertheless credits him with having popularised the highest branches of mathematics.

Italian unworthy of a Milanese, to say nothing of a Tuscan. In spite of his mediocrity he was, however, superior to Leonardo in one point—he gave the results of his labours to the world, while the greater master jealously guarded his from the knowledge of his contemporaries.

The fact that Pacioli never refers to Leonardo in his preface, while he mentions a crowd of other living artists,[1] justifies us in supposing that his acquaintance with the great painter did not begin till later. It was not, in fact, until 1496 that he entered the service of the Sforzi. Lodovico appointed him professor of arithmetic and geometry in the University of Pavia. His pay was modest enough, for while a professor of civil law enjoyed an annual salary of 3,600 lire, he received no more than 310. From 1496 to 1499 Pacioli worked side by side with Leonardo, to whom he devotes a generous eulogium in his *De Divina Proportione*.[2] After the fall of Lodovico, Pacioli quitted Milan at the same time as Leonardo. In 1500 we find him



GROTESQUE HEADS.
(Windsor Library.)

[1] I reprinted this preface in *Les Archives des Arts*, p. 34 *et seq.* In one of those now incomprehensible memoranda with which he filled his notebooks, Leonardo writes, "Learn the multiplication of roots from Maestro Luca." Richter, vol. ii., p. 433.

[2] Finished in December, 1497. The dedication is dated February, 1498. The work was not published until 1509. The *Divina Proportione* itself is followed by "Libellus in tres partiales tractatus divisus quinque corporum regularium et dependentium, activæ perscrutationis, D. Petro Soderino principi perpetuo populi florentini, a M. Luca Paciolo Burgense Minoritano particularitur dicatus. Feliciter incipit." (27 folios.) Next come

living once more at Perugia, and afterwards with da Vinci at Florence.[1] Here, in 1509, he dedicated to the Gonfaloniere Soderini his *Divina Proportione*, which had previously borne a dedication to Il Moro. In the meantime, between 1500 and 1505,[2] he had been teaching at Pisa, and had, in 1508, put in an appearance at Venice. In 1510 we find him again in Perugia, after which all trace of him is lost.

The following headings will give some idea of the contents of this strange compilation. Perspective, like music, and for the same reason, forms a branch of mathematics (book 1, chapter iii). How to divide a dimension, according to the rules of proportion, into a medium part and two extreme parts (chapter viii). How the hexagon and decagon form between them a dimension susceptible of division according to the rules of proportion (chapter xvi).[3]

I must make some reference to the figures inserted in the text of the *Divina Proportione*. Setting aside the separate plates, they are all geometrical diagrams, except those of fol. 25, v°, a man's head in profile, turned to the left, and geometrically divided. We have already said something about Leonardo's share in the production of these engravings.

We know from the evidence of Geoffroy Tory, brought to light by the Marchese d'Adda and M. Dehio,[4] that the initials in Pacioli's

the plates, printed only on one side of the leaf. The first, inscribed "Divina Proportio," is the male head described below; next come twenty-three plates numbered from A to Y; and finally three plates, the first columns, the second entablatures, the third "Porta templi domini dicta speciosa. Hierosolomis." There are besides some geometrical diagrams. Note that the majority of the initials contain those interlaced ornaments so dear to Leonardo.

[1] *De Architecturâ*, ed. Winterberg, p. 144.—Mariotti, *Lettere pittoriche perugine*, p. 127.

[2] Fabroni, *Historia Academiæ Pisanæ*, vol. i., p. 392.

[3] A German savant, Herr Winterberg, has had the courage to translate this chaotic work, and to expound its fundamental law, the Golden Section, a magic formula, which, it is asserted, enables the student to establish the value of any work of art by means of three propositions! This was an honour certainly undreamt of by the humble Pacioli!

[4] *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 1881, p. 269–279.—"Frère Lucas Pacioli de Bourg sainct Sepulchre, de l'ordre des frères mineurs et théologien, qui a faict en vulgar italien un libre intitulé Divina Proportione, et qui a volu figurer lesdictes lettres Attiques, n'en a point aussi parlé ne baillé raison : et je ne m'en ébahis point, car j'ay entendu par aulcuns Italiens qu'il a desrobé sesdictes lettres, et prinses de feu messire

13

Head of a Young Woman.

(WILLIAM H. RAEY.)



Printed by Dreeger, Paris

treatise were designed by, nay, that their type was the invention of Leonardo. Inspired, no doubt, by a passage in Vitruvius, which advises that buildings should be given proportions analogous to those of the human body, he chose to divide his letters into ten parts, just as he had done with the human figure.

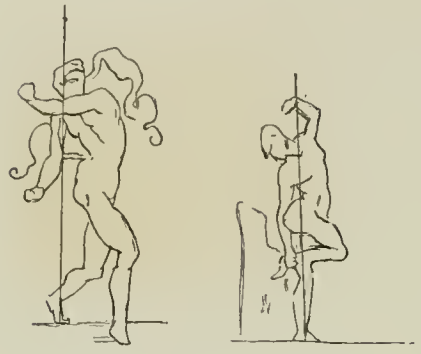
As early as 1514 Sigismondo Fanti, of Ferrara, made no scruple of appropriating the new system of proportion of Leonardo's letters in his *Theorica et Pratica perspicassimi Sigismundi de Fantis Ferrariensis in artem mathematice professoris de modo scribendi fabricandique omnes litterarum species* (Venice, 1514, book iv.). The alphabet he publishes offers some variations upon that of Leonardo—the letter E, for instance, is without the circle traced in the inner angle of the base, and the other circles are sensibly different in proportion—but in spite of that, it is based on the master's system.

But to return to the master.

Studies of physiognomy follow those on proportion and anatomy. Here again Leonardo gives himself up to the most miscellaneous investigations. His countless caricatures are simply illustrations of a theory, unhappily never worked out. The system which governed the conception of the *Last Supper* inspired these researches also. Lomazzo, whose authorities were the intimates (*domestici*) of Leonardo, tells us that "one day the artist, wishing to introduce some laughing peasants into a picture, made choice of certain individuals whose features appeared suitable for his purpose. Having made their acquaintance, he then invited them and other friends of his to a banquet, where, sitting near them, he related a number of the maddest and most laughable stories he could think of, making them scream with laughter,

Léonard Vinci, qui est trespassé à Amboise et estoit très excellent philosophe et admirable painctre et quasi ung autre Archimède. Cedict frère Lucas a faict imprimer ses lettres attiques comme siennes De vray, elles peuvent bien estre à luy, car il ne les a pas faictes en leur deue proportion. A veult avoir sa jambe droite grosse de la dixiesme partie de sa hauteur et non pas de la neuvieusme partie, comme dict frère Lucas Paciolus I'ay entendu que tout ce qú'il en a faict il a prins secrètement de feu Messire Léonard Vinci, qui estoit grant mathématicien, painctre et imageur." (Champfleury, edition of 1529, fols. 13, 35, 41 v°.) The Marchese d'Adda has skilfully defended Pacioli against the accusation of plagiarism. (*Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1868, vol. ii. p. 134.

although they could scarcely have told what they were laughing at. Upon him, none of the looks and gestures provoked by his tales were lost; afterwards, when these guests had departed, he retired to his own house, and drew them in such a skilful manner that his drawings made those who saw them laugh as heartily as the stories had made the guests laugh at the banquet. Unfortunately this composition never proceeded farther than the sketch."

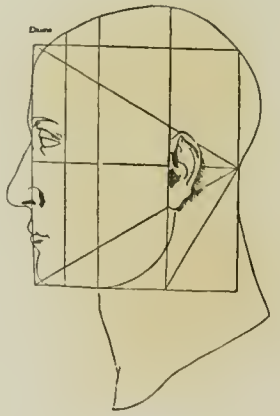


SKETCH FROM THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

This fantastic experiment recalls a picture by one of the primitive Milanese, Michelino da Besozzo, who painted a group of two peasant men and two peasant women convulsed with laughter. About the same period, Bramante ventured on a similar subject: he represented Democritus laughing and Heraclitus weeping.

Lomazzo also tells us that Leonardo used to be fond of watching the looks and gestures of prisoners going to execution. He made careful notes of their eye-movements, of the contractions of their brows, and of the involuntary quivering of their muscles.

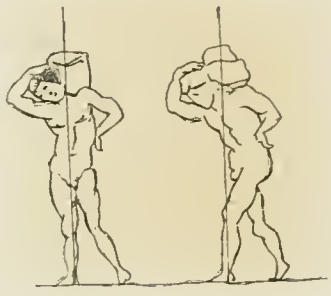
These studies have been quite erroneously called caricatures. They are fragments—great fragments—of a treatise on physiognomy. Leonardo had too lofty an intelligence to be content with making mere frivolous combinations, good for nothing but to provoke a laugh—an impulse, moreover, quite foreign to the Italians of the Renaissance—but he felt a deep and passionate interest in the laws which govern the physical eccentricity as well as the perfection of the human race.



THE PROPORTIONS OF THE HUMAN HEAD, DRAWN BY LEONARDO FOR PACIOLI'S TREATISE.

Hence we find that, long before Grandville, he had a glimpse of the true relation between certain human deformities and animal

types. The old man with a bull-dog's face, the old woman with a bird's head, are in his view reflections from an inferior species; he goes so far as to seek in the human countenance for analogies with web-footed animals and even crustaceans. A step farther, and we should have been tempted to talk of evolution, and to compare him with Darwin.[1]



SKETCH FROM THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

Modern writers have judged this part of Leonardo's work with great severity. "We can hardly say that he has even skimmed the surface of the subject," says one.[2] Another formally condemns one of the laws laid down in the *Trattato.* "The following passage," he declares, "shows how empty and false were the ideas of Leonardo on the difference which exists between the laughing and the weeping countenance: he who sheds tears unites the eyebrows at their junction, knits them closely, forms wrinkles above them, and drops the corners of the mouth; on the other hand, he who laughs lifts them [the corners of the mouth] and expands them, while he raises the eyebrows and draws them apart."[3]

We see, then, that the *Trattato della Pittura* forms a perpetual commentary on the artistic activity of Leonardo. It is a collection of subtle ideas and practical counsels, of scientific observations in which the spirit of analysis is pushed to its extreme limits, and of those concrete guesses or intuitions which reveal the artist of genius. In spite of the occasional minuteness of its instructions, it is better fitted to stimulate the mind than to act as a practical guide and formulary. In its great suggestiveness it is addressed rather to those artists who love to think for themselves, than to those who are content to accept ready-



SKETCH FROM THE "TRATTATO DELLA PITTURA."
(Vatican Library.)

[1] In 1586, the Neapolitan G. B. Porta published his *De Humana Physiognomonia Libri iv.*, in which he establishes relations between the features of certain men and animals. He quotes Aristotle, Pliny, *e tutti quanti.*

[2] A. Lemoine, *De la Physionomie et de la Parole*, Paris, 1865, p. 29.

[3] Piderit, *La Mimique et la Physionomie*, pp. 26, 99, 152. [French tr.]

made formulæ. It must be confessed that no school has felt its inspiration less than that formed by Leonardo himself, whose immediate pupils—Boltraffio, Marco d'Oggiono, Salai, Melzi—never allowed any hard thinking to disturb their equanimity.

We must not forget, however, that in Leonardo's atelier, theoretical teaching was always supplemented by practical and direct oral instruction. The master took pupils, or rather apprentices, to live in his house. His "terms" were 5 lire a month, a very modest sum when we remember all the discomforts and responsibilities which then attended the taking of apprentices.[1] Hear what Leonardo says himself of the troubles this system brought upon him; it confirms what we already know of his placidity. "Giacomo came to live with me on the feast of S. Mary Magdalen, 1490. He was ten years old. The second day, I ordered two shirts, a pair of hose, and a doublet for him. When I put aside the money to pay for these things, he took it out of my purse; I was never able to make him confess the robbery, although I was certain of it. A thieving, lying, pig-headed glutton. Next day I supped with Giacomo Andrea and the said Giacomo; he ate for two and did mischief for four, for he broke three flasks and upset the wine, and then came and supped where I was. *Item*: on the 7th of September he stole a stylus worth 22 soldi from Marco's studio, while he (Marco) was with me; afterwards, the said Marco, after a long search, found it hidden in the said Giacomo's box. Lira 1, soldi 2. *Item*: on the 26th of January following, while I was with Messer Galeazzo da San Severino arranging his joust, and while certain footmen were undressing in order to try on some costumes of savages, in which they had to appear, Giacomo crept near the wallet of one of them, which was lying on the bed with other effects, and stole a few coppers which he found in it. Lire 2, soldi 4. *Item*: Messer Agostino da Pavia having given me, in the said house, a Turkish skin to make a pair of shoes, this Giacomo stole it before the month was out, and sold it to a cobbler for 20 soldi,

[1] "On March 14, 1494, Galeazzo came to live with me, agreeing to pay 5 lire a month for his cost, paying on the 14th day of each month. His father gave me two Rhenish florins." (Richter, vol. ii., p. 440.)

14

Studies in Proportion.

(WITHDRAWN FROM LIBRARY.)



Printed by Draeger Paris

and, as he himself confessed to me, bought sweetmeats with the money. Lire, 2. *Item*: on the 2nd of April, Gian-Antonio left a silver stylus lying on one of his drawings, and Jacopo stole it; it was worth 24 soldi. Lira 1, soldi 4."[1]

Certain other pupils of Leonardo's, besides Salai, Melzi, Marco d'Oggiono and Boltraffio, to whom I shall return later, are known to us by the master's autograph notes, or by other documentary evidence. Among them were one Galeazzo (1494), mentioned only by name; two Germans: "Julio Tedesco," who entered the studio March 16, 1493,[2] and "Gorgio Tedesco" (1504-1515);[3] finally one Lorenzo (1505), aged seventeen.[4] The Florentine Riccio della Porta della Croce and the Spaniard Ferrando were the master's assistants when he was working on the *Battle of Anghiari*.

Leonardo was not fortunate enough to have a pleiad of engravers around him, like the band who worked for Raphael under the direction of Marc Antonio.[5] But indeed his compositions, so much less literary than those of Raphael, could not have failed to lose enormously in reproduction. Their beauty lay mainly in suavity of expression, delicacy of modelling, and charm of colour. If the rude and monotonous processes of early Italian engraving sufficed, as Émile Galichon has happily said, for the rendering of Mantegna's austerity, and Botticelli's somewhat acrid beauty, "it was powerless as yet to translate the indescribable grace of Leonardo's women. Hence it was that Leonardo and his pupils used the burine merely by way of experiment."

Only five or six early engravings of the *Last Supper* have survived,

[1] Charles Ravaisson-Mollien, *Les Manuscrits de Léonard de Vinci*, vol. iii., fol. 15.—Cf. Richter, vol. ii., p. 438–439.

[2] Richter, *Leonardo*, p. 50; and *The Literary Works*, vol. ii. p. 438–439.

[3] *Raphael*, p. 415.

[4] Amoretti, p. 91.

[5] On the engravings attributed to Leonardo *see* above, vol. i. p. 219–221, and on the engravings of the Milanese School, Renouvier: *Des Types et des Manières des Maitres Graveurs au xvi Siècle*, p. 51–54. Montpellier, 1853.—Duplessis: *De quelques Estampes de l'ancienne École milanaise*, in the *Revue Universelle des Arts*, vol. xv. p. 145–164.—Galichon: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1865, vol. i.—D'Adda: *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, Oct. 1863; November, 1864; August, 1868.—Comte Delaborde: *La Gravure en Italie avant Marc Antoine*, p. 184–188.

and they are by anonymous hands. The *Madonnas*, the *S. John*, the *Battle of Anghiari*, and the portraits, first engaged the attention of engravers at a comparatively late period.

The *Trattato* (cap. 36) contains a passage which affords an instructive glimpse into the studio of Leonardo. The painter, we are there told, sits comfortably before his work and drives his brush, with its load of beautiful colour, at his ease. He dresses to please himself. His dwelling is clean and neat, and full of fine pictures. He often has musicians to keep him company,[1] or readers who, ignoring the sound of the hammers, recite works of literature to the delight of those present.

[1] It would seem, therefore, that Vasari told the truth when he said that Leonardo surrounded Mona Lisa with musicians as he worked upon her portrait.



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